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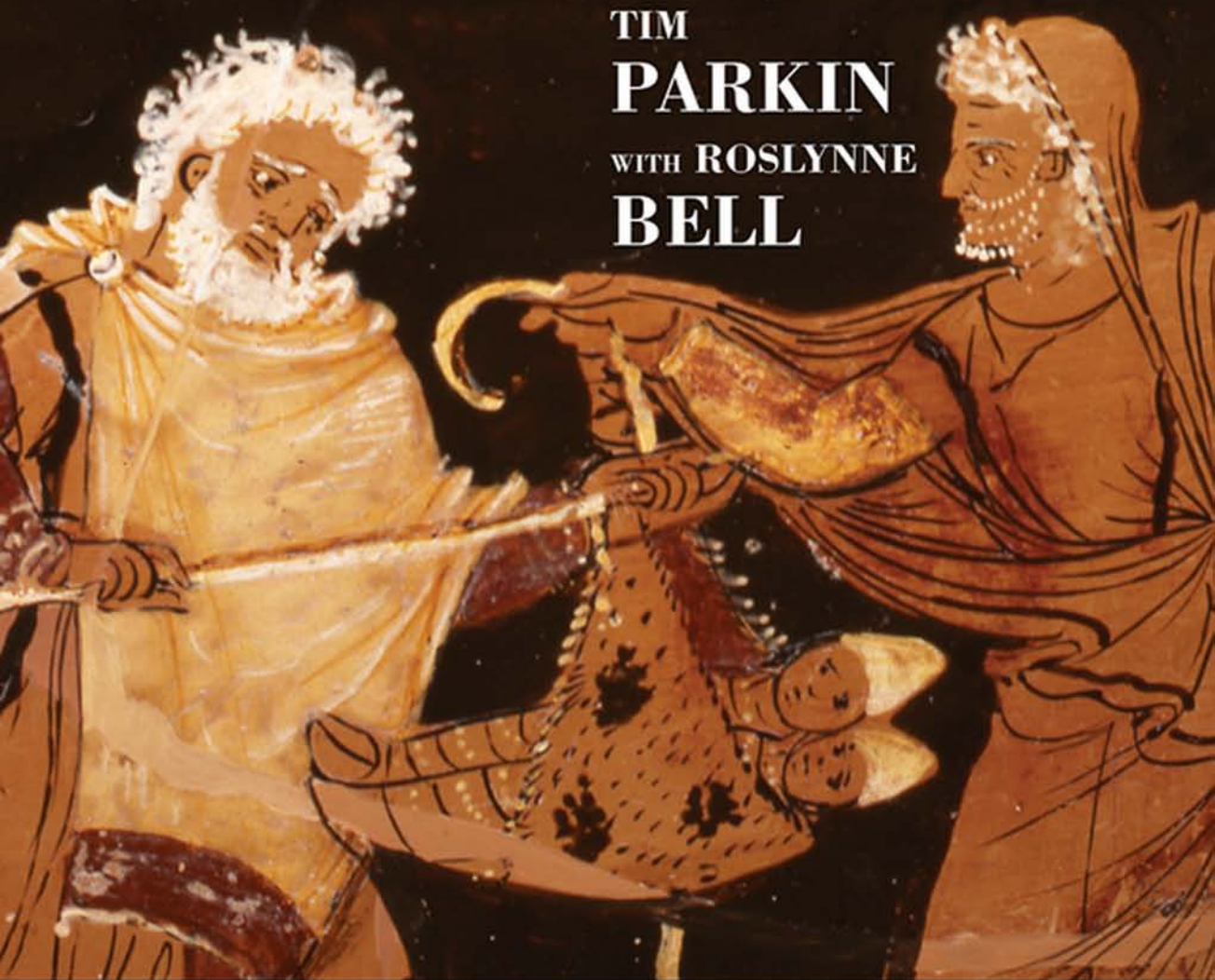
EVANS GRUBBS

TIM

PARKIN

WITH ROSLYNNE

BELL



≡ The Oxford Handbook of
CHILDHOOD AND
EDUCATION IN THE
CLASSICAL WORLD

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THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

**CHILDHOOD AND
EDUCATION IN
THE CLASSICAL
WORLD**

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

CHILDHOOD AND

EDUCATION IN THE

CLASSICAL WORLD

Edited by
JUDITH EVANS GRUBBS

and
TIM PARKIN

with the assistance of
ROSLYNNE BELL

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Judith Evans Grubbs and Tim Parkin

June 2013

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ABBREVIATIONS

For standard abbreviations of classical works see also the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow (4th ed., 2012); for standard abbreviations for papyri and ostraca, in particular for series, see also the Duke checklist of editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic papyri, ostraca, and tablets, available online (<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist.html>); for abbreviations of Jewish works see also Chapter 26 (note 2) in this volume.

AE	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
ARV ²	<i>Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters</i> , 2d ed., by J. D. Beazley, Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1963.
BASP	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
BGU	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i> . Berlin.
BT Ber	Babylonian Talmud: Berakoth
BT Sot	Babylonian Talmud: Sotah
C.Pap.Gr.	<i>I contratti di baliatico</i> (Corpora Papyrorum Graecarum 1), ed. M. Manca Masciadri
C.P.Gr.	and O. Montevecchi, Milan: Corpora Papyrorum Graecarum, 1984.
C.Pap.Jud.	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> , ed. Victor Tcherikover
CAF	<i>Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta</i> , ed. T. Kock. Leipzig: Teubner, 1880–8.
CC	<i>Catalogue des Vases peints du Musée national d'Athènes</i> , by M. Collignon and L. Couve. Paris : Champion, 1902–03.
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum (Series) Latina</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
C Just.	<i>Codex Justinianus</i>
Col. Inv.	Columbia Inventory
CSEL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
CTheod.	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
CVA	<i>Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum</i>

Dig.	<i>Digesta seu Pandectae</i>
FGrHist	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i>
GHI	<i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions</i> , ed. M.N. Tod. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933–48.
<i>Gnom. Id.</i>	<i>Gnomon of the Idiologos</i>
HASB	<i>Hefte des Archäologischen Seminars der Universität Bern</i>
ICUR	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
IJO	<i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau
Jh	<i>Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
LevR	Leviticus Rabbah
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> . Artemis Verlag: Zürich & München, 1981–99.
LSCG	<i>Lois sacrés des cites grecques</i>
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae minoris antiqua</i>
P.Amst.	<i>Die Amsterdamer Papyri I</i> , ed. R.P. Salomons, P.J. Sijpesteijn, and K.A. Worp. Zutphen: Terra, 1980.
P.Athen.	<i>Papyri Societatis Archaeologicae Atheniensis</i> , ed. G.A. Petropoulos, Athens: Academia Scientiarum Atheniensis, 1939.
P.Bour.	<i>Les Papyrus Bouriant</i> , ed. P. Collart, Paris: Champion, 1926.
P.BruX.	<i>Papyri Bruxellenses Graecae</i>
P.Cairo dem.	<i>Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Die demotischen Denkmäler II. Die demotischen Papyrus</i> , ed. Wilhelm Spiegelberg, Strassburg: M. Dumont Schauberg, 1908.
P.Cair.Masp.	<i>Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire</i> , ed. J. Maspero, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1911–16.
P.Cair.Preis.	<i>Griechische Urkunden des Aegyptischen Museums zu Kairo</i> , ed. F. Preisigke, Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1911.
P.Cair.Zen.	<i>Zenon Papyri, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire</i> , ed. C.C. Edgar, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1925–31.

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- P.Col.Zen. *Columbia Papyri. III, Zenon Papyri: Business Papers of the Third Century B.C. dealing with Palestine and Egypt I*
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- P.Fay. *Les Papyrus Fouad I*, ed. A. Bataille, O. Guéraud, P. Jouguet, N. Lewis, H. Marrou, J. Scherer, and W.G. Waddell, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1939.
- P.Fouad. *Fuad I University Papyri*, ed. D.S. Crawford, Alexandria: Société Fouad I de Papyrologie, 1949.
- P.Gen. *Les Papyrus de Genève*, ed. J. Nicole, Geneva: Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, 1896–1906.
- P.Giss. *Griechische Papyri im Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen*, ed. O. Eger, E. Kornemann, and P.M. Meyer, Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1910–12.
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- P.Kell.G. *Greek Papyri from Kellis I*, ed. K.A. Worp, with contributions by J.E.G. Whitehorne and R.W. Daniel. Oxford: Oxbow, 1995.
- P.Köln. *Kölner Papyri*
- P.Lips. *Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig*

P.Lond.	<i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum, London</i>
P.Mert.	<i>A Descriptive Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of Wilfred Merton</i>
P.Meyer	<i>Griechische Texte aus Aegypten</i> , ed. P.M. Meyer, Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1916.
P.Mich.	<i>Michigan Papyri</i>
P.Mich. inv.	Michigan Papyri Inventory
P.Mil.	<i>Papiri Milanesi</i> I, fasc. I, ed. A. Calderini, 1928; 2nd ed., ed. S. Daris, Milan: Società editrice Vita e pensiero, 1967.
P.Münch.	<i>Papyri der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München</i>
P.Oslo.	<i>Papyri Osloenses</i> , Oslo
P.Oxf.	<i>Some Oxford Papyri</i> , ed. E.P. Wegener, Leiden: Brill, 1942–48.
P.Oxy.	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
P.Oxy.Hels.	<i>Fifty Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> , ed. H. Zilliacus, J. Frösén, P. Hohti, J. Kaimio, and M. Kaimio, Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1979.
P.Par.	<i>Notices et textes des papyrus du Musée du Louvre et de la Bibliothèque Impériale</i> , ed. J.A. Letronne, W. Brunet de Presle, and E. Egger, Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1865.
P.Rein.	<i>Papyrus grecs et démotiques recueillis en Égypte</i> , ed. T. Reinach, W. Spiegelberg, and S. de Ricci, Paris: E. Leroux, 1905.
P.Ryl.Copt.	<i>Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library</i> , ed. W.E. Crum, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1909.
P.Sijpesteijn	<i>Papyri in Memory of P. J. Sijpesteijn</i> , ed. A.J.B. Sirks and K.A. Worp, Oakville, CT: American Society of Papyrologists, 2007.
P.Strassb.	<i>Griechische Papyrus der Kaiserlichen Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek zu Strassburg, I</i> , ed. F. Preisigke, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912.
P.Tebt.	<i>The Tebtunis Papyri</i> , London. I, ed. B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt, and J.G. Smyly, London: Henry Frowde, 1902.
P.Wash.Univ.	<i>Washington University Papyri</i>
Para.	<i>Paralipomena. Additions to Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters and to Attic Red Figure Vase-Painters</i> , by J.D. Beazley, Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 1973.

PCG	<i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> , ed. R. Kassel and C. Austin. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983–2001.
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
PMG	<i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> , ed. D.L. Page, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.
PMGF	<i>Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , ed. M. Davies.
PRK	Pesikta de Rav Kahana (a collection of Aggadic midrash)
PSI	<i>Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto</i>
PT	Palestinian Talmud
RE	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Stuttgart: Metzler, 1883–1980.
RECAM	<i>Regional Epigraphic Catalogues of Asia Minor</i>
Rose	<i>Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta</i> , ed. V. Rose, Leipzig: Teubner, 1886.
SB	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
SIG ²	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , ed. W. Dittenberger, Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1915–24.
Stud. Pal.	<i>Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde</i> , ed. C. Wessely, Leipzig: E. Avenarius, 1901–24.
TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i>
UPZ	<i>Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (ältere Funde)</i> , ed. U. Wilcken. Berlin-Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1927–57.
Wilcken Chr.	<i>Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde, I Bd. Historischer Teil, II Hälfte Chrestomathie</i> , by L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1912.

INTRODUCTION

JUDITH EVANS GRUBBS AND TIM PARKIN

The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused. It is our task here to see how much of this childhood history can be recaptured from the evidence that remains to us.

Lloyd deMause

WITH these words, written some four decades ago, the psychohistorian Lloyd deMause began his survey of the horrors of childhood in the past (deMause 1974: 1, from his chapter on “The Evolution of Childhood”). Classifying “Antiquity to the Fourth Century A.D.” as the “Infanticidal Mode” in his evolutionary scheme of childhood history, deMause offered a catena of citations, ranging from fifth-century BCE Athens to the nineteenth century CE, to demonstrate the sadistic and self-centered treatment of children by adults in earlier times (deMause 1974: 51). The past, according to deMause’s “psychogenic” approach, was an era of infanticide, wet nursing, education through corporal punishment, and the sexualization of even young children by adults focused only on their own needs and anxieties without concern for the physical and psychological damage done to their offspring.

In 1974, when deMause first published his *Evolution of Childhood*, an entire volume of over thirty essays devoted entirely to childhood in the classical period (here defined as the Mediterranean world between ca. 800 BCE and ca. 500 CE) would have been thought impossible. Philippe Ariès’s masterful *Centuries of Childhood* had argued, more than a decade earlier than deMause, that the concept of childhood as such was unknown in the European Middle Ages and only (re?-)emerged in the early modern period.¹ Ariès

¹ Ariès 1960; English trans. 1962. For the implication that what he calls “Hellenistic” culture had a concept of childhood, cf. Ariès 1962: 34 on the realistic artistic depiction of children and p. 412 on the existence of a gradated secular system of education. Both, he argues, did not exist in the Middle Ages. For one important response to Ariès, see Linda Pollock 1983, *Forgotten Children*.

did not claim that classical antiquity did not have the idea of childhood *per se* (in fact, he implies that it may have but that the features of classical society that promoted such an idea disappeared after the fall of Rome), but his thesis startled ancient as well as medieval historians and drove a search to discover premodern childhood. Ariès's work is as old (roughly speaking—or as young, depending on one's perspective) as the editors of this handbook; it might be said that the study of childhood in the past is now beginning to reach maturity, or at least is beginning to mature. This volume is hence both timely and necessary, as we look to the future of ancient childhood studies.

The *Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World* features the work of the world's leading scholars of the family in antiquity, including both veterans in ancient family studies and the upcoming new generation of scholars. deMause would find here abandonment, death, and what we would now consider sexual abuse, but he would also find literary and visual images of parental affection and grief at the loss of young children (see the chapters by Parkin, Oakley, Pratt, and Larsson Lovén in this volume), studies of the socialization and education of children (see the chapters by Beaumont, McWilliam, Patterson, Kennell, Bloomer, Sivan, and Vuolanto), medical and legal attitudes toward infants and children (see chapters by Dasen, Dean-Jones, and McGinn in this volume), and the use of material culture to discover children's agency in an adult-centered world (see chapters by Langdon and Harlow in this volume). Our aim is to build on existing scholarship and to point to ways forward. In that context it will be useful to present briefly a synopsis of scholarship in the area to date.

RETROSPECTIVE: THE STUDY OF CLASSICAL CHILDHOOD TO DATE

The emergence of social history (including women's history) as a respectable subdiscipline of ancient history in the 1970s encouraged the study of the family in Greek and Roman antiquity as something more than the recitation of formal legal definitions (the makeup of the Greek *oikos*; the Roman *paterfamilias* wielding absolute power over his dependents) and the parts of the canonical Roman house (e.g., *atrium*, *tablinum*). The pioneer of the study of the Roman family was the late Beryl Rawson, to whom this handbook is dedicated and who in 1984 inaugurated what became a series, still ongoing, of international conferences on the topic, resulting in seminal publications by those leading in the field.² Many of these were specifically centered on children in the Roman

² Rawson 1986 is the fruit of the first Roman family conference, followed by Rawson 1991 and Rawson and Weaver 1997. In 2001, "Roman Family IV" crossed the Pacific to Canada (resulting in George 2005), and in 2007 "Roman Family V" moved to Europe (Switzerland; see Dasen and Späth 2010), with the latest iteration held in Rome in 2012 (volume in preparation). Note also Dixon 2001, a *Festschrift* for Rawson following a conference in her honor.

household, including enslaved children. Meanwhile, the decade between 1984 and 1994 saw the publication of four monographs devoted to children in antiquity (Néraudau 1984 [rev. 1996]; Wiedemann 1989; Golden 1990; Coulon 1994 [rev. 2004]) as well as Suzanne Dixon's *The Roman Mother* (1988).³ At the same time, two books by Dutch scholars raised the question of the existence of "youth" as a cultural construct in (mainly Roman) antiquity, with divergent answers (Eyben 1993, contra Kleijwegt 1991, itself a response to Eyben's original publication in Dutch in 1977; see Laes and Strubbe 2008 for a recent discussion of youth in Roman culture).

The 1990s was the decade of the ancient family: in addition to Rawson's composite volumes there were monographs on the Greek family (Pomeroy 1997; Patterson 1998) and on motherhood and childbirth in classical Greece (Demand 1994) and important studies of the family and marriage in Roman society (Bradley 1991; Treggiari 1991; Dixon 1992; Fayer 1994; Saller 1994; see also Evans Grubbs 1995; Nathan 2000 on the family in late antiquity) and among Jews in classical antiquity (Cohen 1993; cf. Satlow 2001).⁴ It was only in the 2000s, however, that children in Greek and Roman antiquity became the central focus of both monographs and edited conference volumes. In fall 2003 the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College (New Hampshire) hosted a remarkable exhibition, "Coming of Age in Ancient Greece," which later traveled to museums in New York, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles. The exhibition and the conference that accompanied it, "Constructions of Childhood in the Ancient World," spawned two beautifully illustrated volumes of papers by renowned scholars of Greek art, literature, religion, and the family.⁵ In the same year, Beryl Rawson's landmark *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy*, the culmination of more than thirty years of work by the scholar who revolutionized the study of the ancient family, appeared to considerable acclaim. Rawson's book employed all the most important sources of evidence for children in Roman antiquity—literary, legal, epigraphic, and iconographic—focusing both on the "representations" of children in these sources and on the education, familial, and social relationships and role in public life of Roman children between ca. 200 BCE and 200 CE. Shortly afterward, Christian Laes presented an equally compelling, though more somber, look at the lives of Roman children, including slave and lower-class children, and a balanced discussion of "pederasty" in Roman antiquity (Laes 2006; updated English trans. Laes 2010). A collection of essays from the Finnish School at Rome appeared in 2005, looking at the themes of childhood, education, and death in terms of continuity from antiquity to the Middle Ages (Mustakallio et al. 2005). Recent years have also seen the publication of two monographs and one collection of essays on children in early Christianity, all of which engage with the work of classical scholars of the family and enable classicists

³ For bibliography on the Roman family up to 1991, see Krause 1992.

⁴ It is important to add, however, that long before this "decade of the ancient family," W. K. Lacey's 1968 volume on the Greek family had pointed the way.

⁵ Neils and Oakley 2003 is the catalog of the exhibition, accompanied by seven essays on Greek childhood; Cohen and Rutter 2007 published twenty papers from the conference, whose range goes beyond classical Greece to consider also Etruria, Rome, and late antiquity.

to see the New Testament and patristic sources as part of the larger body of ancient evidence (Bakke 2005; Horn and Martens 2009; Horn and Phenix 2009).⁶ The most recent publication from the “Roman Family” conference series focuses entirely on children, especially the “hidden” and marginalized (Dasen and Späth 2010), and in 2012 a new study of childhood in ancient Athens by Lesley Beaumont was published. There have been studies of children in Roman art, including funerary art (Huskinson 1996; Uzzi 2005; Backe-Dahmen 2006; Mander 2012), and fatherless children have received attention also (Krause 1995a, 1995b; Huebner and Ratzan 2009; cf. Corbier 1999). The fourth “Incontro tra Storici e Giuristi,” held at the University of Parma in late 2009, was devoted to the theme *Pueri et adulescentes* and focused particularly on the position of children and youths in classical and late Roman law. Papers from the conference have now appeared in the journal *Iuris Antiqui Historia* (volume 4, 2012). Moreover, the latest volume of the long-running project *Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei* (Researches on ancient slavery) at the University of Mainz is devoted entirely to children in slavery and the lives (and deaths) of child slaves both in antiquity and comparative perspective.⁷ Education, an important aspect of the lives of many older children and youths between the ages of seven and eighteen or twenty, albeit mostly elite males, has been the focus of several recent studies. Whereas for decades those interested in education in the classical world have had to rely on Marrou (1948, Engl. trans. 1956) and Bonner (1977, for Roman education), we now have books by Morgan (1998), Criboire (2001, 2007), and Bloomer (2011).

Recently, scholarly discussion has turned to the newborn and very young infant (Dasen 2004), previously understudied due to a modern assumption that such young children barely registered in the ancient world.⁸ Admittedly, the archeological evidence for the death and burial of infants, rather than their lives, has garnered most attention (Gusi et al. 2008; Guimier-Sorbets and Morizot 2010; cf. Scott 1999). But these publications also mark a new, heartening trend in ancient childhood studies: the increasing use of archeological data—primarily from funerary contexts but also from sanctuaries and domestic sites—to illuminate the role of young children in the classical world and the attitudes of the adult world to the youngest members of their society. As our handbook shows, much still can be done with the material evidence in all periods of antiquity.

Interest in the family in antiquity has not abated, and new studies appear almost monthly. The posthumous publication in 2011 of Beryl Rawson’s edited *Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* showcases the work of both long-established and recently emerging scholars and includes a number of essays devoted particularly to children. Two volumes from the 2009 conference “From *Oikos* to *Familia*: Framing the

⁶ See also Moxnes 1997 and Balch and Osiek 2003, the latter the result of a conference that brought together scholars of early Christianity with experts in Roman family studies (Dixon, Laes, Rawson, Saller) for a fruitful dialogue.

⁷ Heinen 2012. Unfortunately, this volume appeared too late for our contributors to consider it.

⁸ On this, see M. Carroll, “Infant Death and Burial in Roman Italy,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 24 (2011): 99–120.

Discipline for the Twenty-First Century” appeared in 2012 (Laurence and Strömberg 2012; Harlow and Larsson Lovén 2012), spanning the period from preclassical Greece to late antiquity; archeological evidence, including osteological, features in many of the essays. And whereas Philippe Ariès in 1960 could ignore the existence of childhood in antiquity altogether, fifty years later a multivolume *Cultural History of Childhood and Family* could quite properly begin with the classical world (Harlow and Laurence 2010; note also Fass 2013, a one-volume history of childhood that opens with a chapter on classical antiquity by Keith Bradley).⁹

PROSPECTIVE: THIS VOLUME

A handbook such as this has two, somewhat conflicting, responsibilities: (1) to inform readers (many of whom will be new to the subject) of the most important developments and findings in the field in recent decades; and (2) to present new, innovative approaches and perspectives that will influence work to come in the future. Our handbook offers what we hope is a profitable combination: state-of-the-question coverage of aspects of childhood and education in antiquity that have received considerable attention already, along with original perspectives and theses arising from the current research of the authors themselves. We should emphasize that our aim in this handbook is not to provide a summation of work done to date, though the debt to the last four decades of scholarship will be evident throughout. Rather, what we seek to achieve is the presentation of a range of approaches to build on and to help guide the future study of childhood in antiquity. In particular, we would want to emphasize the vast geographical and chronological focus of this handbook; while the chapters in Part II focus on the Greek world from the archaic to the fourth century BCE and those in Part III discuss aspects of Roman literature, society, artifacts and law, Part V provides a particular focus on the Eastern Mediterranean and Part VI on late antiquity and early Christianity. We also study the full range of childhood, from conception and early childhood (see especially the chapters in Part I) to the onset of adulthood, with discussion throughout of differences not just over time and space but also according to class and gender. But what is perhaps most significant in relation to future studies is the incorporation of the full range of evidence used in our chapters: we go well beyond traditional literary sources (though these are fully exploited) to incorporate also medical, legal, papyrological, and archeological material. The latter is particularly important here, especially skeletal evidence, and in this regard we also make reference to the use of new technologies that help us to examine, for example, the health of children. These new approaches help to elucidate,

⁹ For a recent bibliography on ancient childhood, see especially Ville Vuolanto's website at the University of Tampere (Finland): <http://www.uta.fi/yky/yhteystiedot/henkilokunta/villevuolanto/index/>.

refine, and in many cases revise our understanding of the realities of life for children and prevalent attitudes toward children, for example in terms of responses to neonate and infant deaths. Our focus on education in Part IV is particularly on approaches to the socialization of the young, as children prepare and are prepared for adulthood. We seek throughout to investigate children in their own right, rather than simply through the eyes of adults, and to go beyond general ideas and ideals of childhood to consider children themselves as active agents, for example in the ways that children may manipulate material culture (see especially Chapter 8 by Langdon and Chapter 16 by Harlow); we are beginning to understand more and more the ways children play a role in how cultures define themselves and in how their own futures are decided.

DEFINING THE CHILD

Maxima debetur puero reverentia (a child is owed the utmost respect; Juvenal, *Satires* 14.47). In the essays in this handbook we seek to explore the full range of what it meant to be a child and to be educated (or not) in antiquity. We also allow for wide parameters in our definitions of child, and our subjects range from before birth to young adults of up to twenty years of age. Such diversity may also be found in the ancient sources, both literary and artistic. What did Juvenal understand by the term *puer*, for example? At various points throughout this handbook our authors raise the question of terminology, both Greek and Latin, and it should not surprise that a range of meanings, precise or otherwise, emerge—just as the modern English term “child” may have a range of meanings and is not defined purely by a set number of years, especially in the ways childhood is socially and culturally constructed, in modern as in more ancient times. While the topos of the “ages of man” has a long history, definitions of childhood herein vary markedly, even within a framework that tends to be based around multiples of seven. Solon, for example, described the first of ten stages of life as that of the ungrown child to the age of seven years, marked by the loss of the first set of teeth; this is followed by the seven years up to age fourteen, the age of puberty; in the third hebdomad, to the age of twenty-one years, he (Solon refers only to the male throughout) continues to grow and develops a beard. Such a “neat” system is only one of numerous patterns developed through antiquity and beyond; so, for example, Claudius Ptolemaeus in the second century CE recounts a life of seven stages, starting with the *brephos* (infant), to age four, the *pais* to age fourteen years, and the *meirakion* to age twenty-two—each stage linked to a different planet.¹⁰ Not only do the numbers vary between different accounts of the ages of life, but also it is clear that they have more to do with mathematical or astrological patterns than with everyday reality. What we can say with certainty is that childhood in antiquity was not defined by a set number of years consistently across societies, and a variety of terms was employed for

¹⁰ For these and other examples, see Parkin in Harlow and Laurence 2010: 97–103.

different stages. To take just one example: Livy has Hannibal describe himself as a *puer* when he set out on his campaign against the Romans, whereas by the end of the campaign he is a *senex*: in other words it appears that Hannibal is a *senex* at age forty-four, whereas he had been a *puer* sixteen years earlier (Livy 30.30.10–11)—an effective but hardly numerically precise contrast. Livy emphasizes it further by having Hannibal in the same speech refer to his foe, Scipio Africanus, as an *adulescens*: Scipio was thirty-four years old at the time; it is interesting in that connection, as Golden notes in Chapter 12 of this volume, that Silius Italicus has Scipio declare that his political enemies dismissed him as a *puer* when he took up his command in his earlier twenties (*Pun.* 16.645–62).

In this volume we make full use of the range of meanings of childhood, from conception and infancy through and beyond puberty to adolescence and older youth. In the very first chapter of this volume, for example, Dasen discusses the terminology used for the fetus and newborn child and shows that embryo, neonate, and very young infant may be seen as part of the same stage, with older infants in a different conceptual framework; this ties in with Parkin's observations in Chapter 2 regarding perinatal demography, a development anticipated (for example) in the terminology employed by Aristophanes of Byzantium in the context of the newborn. In Chapter 30, Stevens's exploration of archeological evidence supports Dasen's findings with her discussion of two stages of infancy. Dean-Jones notes in Chapter 5 the stages of and terminology used for childhood in medical writers, while Patterson (Chapter 18) explores Plato's use of terms and Golden (Chapter 12) detects sensitivity to childhood's stages in Latin epic. Both Oakley (Chapter 7) and Beaumont (Chapter 9) investigate the different age stages of childhood as depicted in art, and Beaumont also makes the telling point that gender is generally not distinguished in early childhood, only later. Rites of passage, and stages of education, may mark the later transition from childhood to early adulthood, as, for example, Garland (Chapter 10), Casey (Chapter 21), and Bloomer (Chapter 22) illustrate. As these and other chapters make clear, definitions of childhood in the past as in the present are based on much more than biology, and indeed variety will occur not just over time and space but also between individuals.¹¹

CHANGE OVER TIME?

What difference did Christianity make?¹² Answers to Ramsay MacMullen's famous question are offered by several authors in this handbook (e.g., Evans Grubbs in Chapter 4 and Laes in Chapter 6), but particularly in Part VI, which focuses on the period

¹¹ On Greek terminology and its fluidity, see, e.g., Golden 1990: 12–16, and note also comments by Beaumont, Garland, and Parca in Chapters 9, 10, and 23. On age terminology in Latin, note still the detailed studies by Dan Slusanski 1974 in *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* 19: 103–21, 267–96, 345–69, 437–51, 563–78, with Eyben 1993: 31–7 and Parkin 2003: 15–26.

¹² R. MacMullen, "What Difference Did Christianity Make?" *Historia* 35 (1986): 322–43.

of late antiquity, here defined as ca. 250–600 CE. The late antique period was not, of course, a solely Christian society, as the chapters by Sivan (Chapter 26 on the Jewish communities of the eastern Mediterranean) and Vuolanto (Chapter 28, using the evidence of the “pagan” rhetor Libanius as well as patristic sources) demonstrate. But the Christianization of classical society is probably the most important change to occur in the later centuries of the Roman Empire. The impact of Christian teachings and mores on children is difficult to assess. Two recent monographs focus explicitly on children in early Christianity (Bakke 2005; Horn and Martens 2009) and draw entirely on the evidence of New Testament and patristic writings. They conclude that Christianity offered a new perspective on children as actors in their own right with recognized roles in ritual and society—“children became people,” as the provocative title of Bakke (2005) puts it—and were seen as “valuable in themselves” (Horn and Martens 2009: 347).¹³ In Part VI, not only literary but also archeological and epigraphic sources of the late antique period are brought to bear on the question, and the conclusions are much more nuanced. As Leyerle (Chapter 27) and Vuolanto (Chapter 28) show, Christianity did offer new options for children (particularly, an alternative to marriage) and new ideas about childhood, but the Christian admiration for celibacy meant that having children, even within marriage, was no longer always considered a positive good. Kreiger’s chapter (Chapter 29) on the commemoration of young children in the Roman catacombs and Stevens’s analysis of amphora burials of neonates and infants in late Roman North Africa and Spain (Chapter 30) reveal distinctive concerns recording the commemoration of young children among Christian populations. Yet even here continuities and parallels with earlier practices (and presumably beliefs) can be found: although families in the (largely but not entirely) Christian catacombs did commemorate infants and young children to a greater degree than did earlier, pagan Romans and also display a greater tendency to remember girls as well as boys, as in the classical period children continue to be described as “innocent” and “most sweet,” and features of traditional funerary rituals continue. And amphora burials for infants and the use of infant cemeteries go back centuries, indeed almost a thousand years, as Dasen’s discussion of the extensive infant burial ground on the Greek island of Astypalaia shows (Chapter 1). So here too there is as much continuity as change. Both Stevens and Kreiger demonstrate, however, how much can be learned from detailed and close analysis of how families marked the burials of their young children, in ways that were different from, yet not necessarily inferior to, the commemoration of adults.

Moreover, as several contributors suggest, the early Roman Empire may have seen an equally significant shift in legal, philosophical, and literary attitudes toward children (of course, a shift in the attitudes of educated elite thinkers does not necessarily translate into immediate change in actual treatment). Golden (Chapter 12) notes the appearance of anxieties over “surrogate parenting” in the writings of the Flavian epic

¹³ This was already suggested by Thomas Wiedemann in the final chapter of his 1989 book on children and adults in the Roman Empire.

poets and contemporaries such as Tacitus and Quintilian and relates this in part to the “insecurities” of Flavian emperors about the legitimacy of their own dynasty. McGinn (Chapter 17) sees an increasingly favorable treatment of children in Roman law, particularly evident in the alimentary foundations and changes in inheritance rules under second-century emperors but originating in the demographic and moral concerns of Augustus’ legislation on marriage and child-bearing over a century earlier. Evans Grubbs (Chapter 4) suggests that “growing discomfort” with the practice of infant exposure lies behind the frequent mention of exposure and its consequences found in philosophical, rhetorical, and legal sources of the late first and second centuries CE—although outright condemnation of abandonment does not appear in Roman law until the Christian emperors of the fourth and fifth centuries. So perhaps we can discern a sea change in regard to ancient concern for the welfare and survival of young children, at least as expressed in literature and law, as a consequence of the establishment of an imperial monarchical form of government whose rulers were prompted by demographic and moral considerations.

Or perhaps not. After all, the earliest art and literature of the classical world, the Homeric poems and Archaic Greek art, evince an interest in and sympathetic portrayal of young children and their activities (Oakley in Chapter 7, Pratt in Chapter 11), and in his *Laws* the fourth-century BCE philosopher Plato sets out a program for the rearing and education of children that in some ways seems surprisingly modern (Patterson in Chapter 18). More than twenty years ago Mark Golden warned against the readiness of historians to discern “change” in societal attitudes toward children and conceptions of childhood, both for antiquity and for later periods:

Rather than major discontinuities or discoveries, attractive though they are, we should be happy to come upon moderate variation and development, and in either direction, progress or decline. So, for example, we should abandon the social historian’s Fountain of Youth, the “invention of childhood,” and recognize that many, indeed most, societies have had a conception of childhood, with both positive and negative characteristics. What varies is the age range of childhood, children’s social roles, the nature of gender distinctions, the way certain abilities and behaviours are categorized as positive and negative.¹⁴

Above all, when thinking about ancient childhood, we must always be attentive not only to the (perhaps chimerical) question of change over time but also to discrepant experiences of children even within the same time period—discrepant because of gender, status, and regional differences.¹⁵ The chapters in our handbook recognize these discrepancies: Sigismund-Nielsen’s portrayal of the lives of enslaved and lower-class

¹⁴ “Continuity, Change and the Study of Ancient Childhood,” *Échos du Monde Classique/Classical Views* 36, n.s. 11 (1992): 7–18, quotation at 13.

¹⁵ On the concept of “discrepant experiences,” see D. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), especially Chapter 8.

children in Roman Italy (Chapter 14) and Larsson Lovén's emphasis (in Chapter 15) on the importance freeborn offspring had for freedmen and women who had survived slavery and managed to form their own families reveal clearly how far removed their experiences were from those of the offspring of elite families in either the early Empire (on which see McWilliam in Chapter 13) or late antiquity (on which see Vuolanto in Chapter 28). And while in many cases the conception and birth of a child was desired and nurtured through a variety of medical, religious, and magical means (see Dasen in Chapter 1), other babies were unwanted and disposed of through exposure and sometimes even killing (see Evans Grubbs in Chapter 4 and cf. Liston and Rotroff in Chapter 3). Moreover, although some girls in the Greek and Roman worlds did participate in religious rites (see Garland in Chapter 10) and education outside the home (see Dillon in Chapter 20 and Bloomer in Chapter 22), unlike their brothers the daughters of wealthy elites were never socialized to play a role in political leadership or public office and were married off much earlier, while still in their teens. Location was just as important a factor in determining the life and experiences of children in antiquity as it has been in later ages: despite their proximity, classical Athens and Sparta had quite different ideas about the upbringing and socialization of young people (compare Beaumont in Chapter 9 and Casey in Chapter 21 on Athens, with Kennell in Chapter 19 on Sparta). Egypt, for which there is plentiful evidence for children's lives in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (see Parca in Chapter 23 and Pudsey in Chapter 24), is often considered *sui generis* in Mediterranean society; while papyrologists have rightly stressed the relevance of the Egyptian material to our understanding of the Roman imperial world, Huebner (Chapter 25) shows that Egypt, like other societies of the ancient Near East and Asia Minor, had very different ideas about adoption and sibling relationships, and this obviously would affect the experiences of the children involved. Just as there was no one ancient family (or Greek family or Roman family) but many variations depending on region, class, and time period,¹⁶ so also the lives of children, and the conceptions of childhood, in the Mediterranean world over twelve hundred years varied significantly.

Throughout *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World* shows that while so-called modern attitudes to children and childhood have a much longer history than some may have assumed, there are also worlds of difference between both attitudes and realities then and now. Furthermore, this handbook is grounded in the firm belief that the study of childhood in the past is not just of interest in its own right but is also revelatory of wider aspects of historical societies and cultures, providing insights that a focus on adults alone would obscure or hide.

The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day.

Milton, *Paradise Regained* 220-1

¹⁶ See Beryl Rawson's Introduction to Rawson 2011.

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PART I

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GESTATION, BIRTH,
DISEASE, AND DEATH

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CHAPTER 1

BECOMING HUMAN: FROM THE EMBRYO TO THE NEWBORN CHILD

VÉRONIQUE DASEN

INTRODUCTION

SINCE antiquity, speculations on the emergence of human life and the status of the embryo have prompted intense medical, philosophical, religious, and legal debates. How does fetal matter grow into a human being? When does it have a soul? Is it from conception, gradually, or at birth only? What kind of faculties and capacities were attributed to it? Was it treated as a potential person or just as an extension of the mother's body? The status of the embryo raises important issues on the definition of life and human identity.

FETAL GROWTH AND ENSOULMENT

The modern distinction between a fetus (until three months of pregnancy) and an embryo (from three months until delivery) does not apply to ancient categories. Hippocrates, Aristotle, Galen, and most ancient medical authors adopt a gradualist view. They define three main stages in the development of the embryo: first the coagulation of the seed; then the formation of fetal parts, progressively associated with movements; and finally the achievement of all body parts. An age-specific terminology relating to the growth process is not clearly fixed. *Kuoumenon*, *kuema*, *to kata gastros*, “what is carried in the womb,” is usually the product of conception. For the Hippocratics, *embruon* and *paidion* are both used for the different stages of formation (e.g., Hippoc. *Oct. [De Octimestri partu]*, 7.452–60 Littré). Galen is more precise and distinguishes the semen, *gone*, from the coagulated seed, *kuema*, which becomes a living being, *kuoumenon zoon*, when the heart starts beating (Gal. *De Sem.* 4.542–3 Kühn); *embruon* is applied to the

formation stage, *brephos*, “baby,” and *paidion*, “child,” to the embryo in its last stage as well as to the small child in his first seven years (Hanson 2003; Boudon-Millot 2008).

Two schools of thought dominate regarding the preliminary stage of conception. For the Hippocratics, man and wife each produce a seed (*gonos*) that is both male and female, coming from all parts of the body, and these seeds mix together in the uterus (*Gen. [De Genitura]* 3–8, 7.474–82 Littré). The more vigorous of the two determines the main characteristics of the child, such as sex and physical resemblance (Dean-Jones 1994: 153–76; Bonnard 2006). For Aristotle, only the male seed possesses a creative principle. It breathes life into the menstrual blood thanks to the generative heat of the *pneuma* providing form (*eidos*) to passive (*pathetikon*) female matter (*Gen. An.* 729a30). Menstrual blood is the final residue of the blood, but less perfectly concocted than the male seed, and it contributes only nutritive soul to the child. In this respect, the woman is only a receptacle (Balme 1990; Dean-Jones 1994: 176–99; Morel 2008).

In both schools, the transformation of seed into an embryo is an extended process that takes several days. Seed then acquires breath (*pneuma*) on account of the warmth of the womb. The uterus is compared to an oven (*kaminos*) where heated seed rises like bread, a long-lived metaphor also found in Aristotle and in popular imagery.¹ The process is also likened to a sort of coagulation; male seed “sets” female residue, as rennet sets milk (Arist. *Gen. An.* 739b20–5). Two descriptions of aborted fetuses with recognizable limbs occur in *Nature of the Child* (*Nat. puer.* 13, 7.488–92 Littré) and *Fleshes* (*Carn.* 19, 8.608–12 Littré; fifth century BCE); they are both believed to be six or seven days old (King 1990: 10–11; Hanson 1992; King 1998: 136).

In the second stage, the embryo slowly becomes a living being with visible limbs. The Hippocratic treatise *Nature of the Child* uses vegetal analogies to explain the growth process in humans. Like a plant, the health of the child depends on its “soil,” the womb. Sickly or too-small children result either from a blow or from a deficient womb providing not enough space or food (*Gen.* 9–10, 7.482–4 Littré; Bien 1997).

A common belief is that the timing of formation differs according to the sex of the child. In *Nature of the Child*, boys are formed after thirty days and girls after forty-two days because the latter are colder, weaker, and slower to coagulate (*Nat. puer.* 18, 7.498–500 Littré). Hippocratics relate the formation time to that of the lochial flows following delivery: longer for girls than for boys (*Nat. Puer.* 18, 7.504–6 Littré; *Morb. mul. [De morbis mulierum]* 1.72, 8.152 Littré). For most authors, the *embruon* becomes a living being as soon as the first movements appear. For boys, this takes place in the third month and for girls in the fourth month or later (e.g., *Nat. Puer.* 21, 7.510–12 Littré).

Ancient medical texts do not discuss the question of ensoulment, but Hippocratics acknowledge that the embryo is endowed with feelings. It can suffer (*kakopathein*), especially in the eighth month, the most critical of all, and suffers too (*ponein*) before delivery takes place (*De septimestri partu* 3, 7.438 Littré; *Oct.* 10, 7.452–4 Littré). For

¹ Hippoc. *Nat. puer. [De natura pueri]* 12, 7.486–8 Littré; Arist. *Gen. An.* 764a12–20; Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* 1.51, 2.24.

practitioners, however, the notion of completion is important; until birth, the embryo is treated as a potential human being only (Boudon-Millot 2008: 94).

The time of ensouling was much debated in philosophical schools. For the gradualists, such as Aristotle, human life starts at a certain point during the course of pregnancy, when the fetal parts are formed and movements perceptible. The unborn then becomes a living being. For Aristotle, the soul (*nous*) is potentially present since the time of conception because it is transmitted by the male seed (*Gen. An.* 736a–b, 737a33), but the faculties of the embryo develop gradually: first it is plant-like, with a vegetative soul; then it gets a sentient or sensitive soul, like an animal, and after that a rational soul, when the embryo has acquired a human shape, at forty days for a male and ninety for a female (*HA* 7, 583b14–23; Congourdeau 2007: 138–44; 306–8).

The Platonic school believed in animation at conception, as did the Pythagoreans. The pseudo-Galenic author of *Whether What Is Carried in the Womb Is a Living Being* (*An animal sit quod est in utero* 19.158–81 Kühn) explains that the soul is contained in the seed and the embryo is human from the start; he ends with a direct address to the embryos, as if they were in the audience: “Let me address the embryos themselves, since they have acquired full human form. Come out of the recesses” (Kapparis 2002: Appendix 1, 201–13, with translation).

The gradualist and Platonic views were opposed by the Presocratics, such as Empedocles, and later by the Stoics, who defended the idea that human life starts at birth. Pseudo-Plutarch offers a useful survey of their different opinions (*Ps.-Plut. Mor. De placit. phil.* 5.15, 907): for the Stoics, the embryo is just a part of the maternal viscera and not a living being (*zoon*); it is compared to a fruit that falls when it is ripe. Empedocles also does not regard it as an animal, for it does not breathe (*apnoun*). For Diogenes, the embryo is inanimate although it has a natural heat. Herophilus observes its motion but regards it as mechanical and not due to an animal life. For all, the soul, which is cold, enters through the mouth with the first breath of air, the basis of life.² Astrologers appealed to the notion to explain the diverging fates of twins, born successively, some minutes or hours apart from the other, and with different natal charts (Dasen 2008a).

Most medieval theologians and doctors accepted the Aristotelian principles with the succession of three souls; they Christianized the last one, created and infused by God when the embryo has human shape. For Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, the soul enters the body at formation forty days after conception for a male and ninety days for a female (Pouderon 2007). But in the Eastern Christian Empire, animation takes place at conception: the soul is created at the same time as the body; they must be simultaneous because man is only one (Kapparis 2002: 39–41; Congourdeau 2007).

In Roman law, the unborn is regarded as a living being (*in rerum natura esse*: *Dig.* 1.5.26, Julian; *in rebus humanis esse*: *Dig.* 1.5.7, Paul), and in case of the father’s death its

² *He psuche* (the soul) derives from *to psuchos* the cold; Kapparis 2002: 41–4; Congourdeau 2007: 145–9; Gourinat 2008.

succession rights are guaranteed until delivery. Birth activates its potential rights if it is born alive, even malformed with an animal-like shape (*si non integrum animal editum sit*) as long as it has senses (*cum spiritu tamen*: Dig. 28.2.12, Ulpian).

THE LIMITS OF HUMAN PROCREATION: ONE CHILD OR MORE?

The birth of more than one child at a time has long been a source of reflections on the definition of normality in procreation. Greek medical theories provide contrasting views about twinning, varying from rejection to valuation; some see it as the result of an ideal conception, and others relate it to notions of monstrosity and excess.

For the Hippocratic author of *On Regimen* 1.30, twinning is a natural phenomenon that occurs when the circumstances are very favorable. It is related to the structure of the womb, symmetrically divided into two parts. If both parts of the womb are equally developed and if the seed from both parents is “abundant and strong,” twins may be formed through one act of intercourse. This positive image is stressed by the idea that the two breasts correspond to the bipartite structure of the uterus. This belief is repeated by authors of later periods, including nonmedical authors such as pseudo-Plutarch, who asserts that wisely “nature has fashioned women’s breasts double, so that, if there be twins, they may have a double source of nutrition” (*Mor.* 3D; Dasen 2005a).

Aristotle agrees with the Hippocratic theory that twins are generally produced from one act of intercourse, when the male emits an unusually large amount of sperm that meets a similar quantity of female material. But he regards twinning in man as an abnormal phenomenon that belongs to the category of monstrosities because man, like large animals, normally has only one child at a time (*Gen. An.* 4.4.772a36–b1). Aristotle adds that multiple births are often associated with physical malformations because numerous embryos “hamper each other’s being brought to perfection” (*Gen. An.* 4.4.770b25–7). Physical anomalies were thus believed to occur more often in countries where women often give birth to twins, as in Egypt (*Gen. An.* 4.4.770a35).

The notion of unlike twins (now known as dizygotic) appears in theories on superfecundation. Aristotle describes a rare phenomenon (now known as superfecundation) that occurs when a woman has intercourse with different partners within a short space of time, leading to two distinct conceptions. When the second conception occurs during pregnancy, the second embryo is stillborn because of its retarded growth (*HA* 7.4.585a). These theories throw an ambiguous light on twinning because all examples are cases of adultery. Thus, Aristotle describes a woman who gave birth to twins, one of whom looked like her husband and the other like her lover (*HA* 7.4.585a; see also Pliny *HN* 7.49). The ancients assumed the existence of two different fathers because this could explain the physical differences of dizygotic twins. However, no legal text mentions cases of superfecundation or of double paternity, though Roman law envisages the most

rare and delicate situations (and a double paternity would cause many problems of succession). This topic seems to have belonged only to the field of medical speculation and popular beliefs.

Where did the ancients place the physiological limit to the multiplication of embryos? Aristotle asserts that five is the highest number of children that can be born at one time (*HA* 7.4.584b). This remark corresponds to modern observations: there is no theoretical limit to the number of embryos that may be formed, but if there are over five, the fetuses are born prematurely before they become viable. A few cases of births of more than five children at a time are reported. Pompeius Trogus (first century BCE), for example, mentions the birth of seven infants in Egypt, but he does not say if they were born alive or survived (Pliny *HN* 7.33; Strabo 15.1.22, citing Aristotle). Aristotle reports the extraordinary case of a miscarriage with twelve stillborn infants (Arist. *HA* 7.4.585a; see also Pliny *HN* 7.48); this case may be depicted in the ninth-century CE manuscript preserved in Brussels (Figure 1.1).³ Ancient authors also mention cases where the phenomenon of twinning is multiplied by an exceptional fecundity. Soranus tells of a woman who gave birth three times to five children, but “with difficulty,” whereas Aristotle reports that a woman “had twenty children at four births; each time she had five, and most of them grew up” (Sor. *Gyn.* 4.1; Arist. *HA* 7.4.584b; Pliny *HN* 7.33).

The social and religious reception of multiple births varies in time and space. The mortality of the mother and the babies was much higher than for single births: “at the birth of twins neither the mother nor more than one of the two children usually lives” (Pliny *HN* 7.37; see also Sor. *Gyn.* 4.1). The risks were believed to be even higher in twins of different sexes because male and female fetuses do not develop at the same rhythm (Pliny *HN* 7.37; see also Arist. *Gen. An.* 4.6.775a; *Problemata* 10.894a). Many ancient texts and inscriptions refer to such dramatic deliveries, ending with the death of the mother or children or both.⁴ The risk of miscarriage is reflected by the name *Vopiscus*, given to the “twin born after being retained in the womb when the other twin had been killed by premature delivery” (Pliny *HN* 7.47; Dasen 2005a: 47–9).

Twins are best documented in the Roman period where they seem to have been welcomed, probably because fecundity was an explicit political concern in Roman society. Tacitus describes the birth of twins as “a rare felicity, even in modest households” (Tac. *Ann.* 2.84; cf. Plut. *Sull.* 34.5). On the other hand, the delivery of more than two children at a time was an ill omen (Dasen 2005b). Pliny reports that the birth of quadruplets, two boys and two girls, at Ostia at the end of the reign of Augustus “portended the food shortage that followed” (Pliny *HN* 7.33). These births were regarded as anomalous because they did not fit with the Hippocratic model of a bipartite uterus; the number of children did not correspond to the two breasts. An excessive fecundity was not

³ Dasen 2005a: 42–4, fig. 6. On the frequency and the mortality rate of multiple births higher than four, see Pons and Laurent 1991. (Nine stillborn infants were registered in 1976, but the record is of fifteen fetuses in 1971 from a woman who had induced ovulation).

⁴ For example, *Anth. Pal.* 7.166 (twins), 168 (triplets); Aul. Gell. *NA* 10.2.1 (quintuplets).

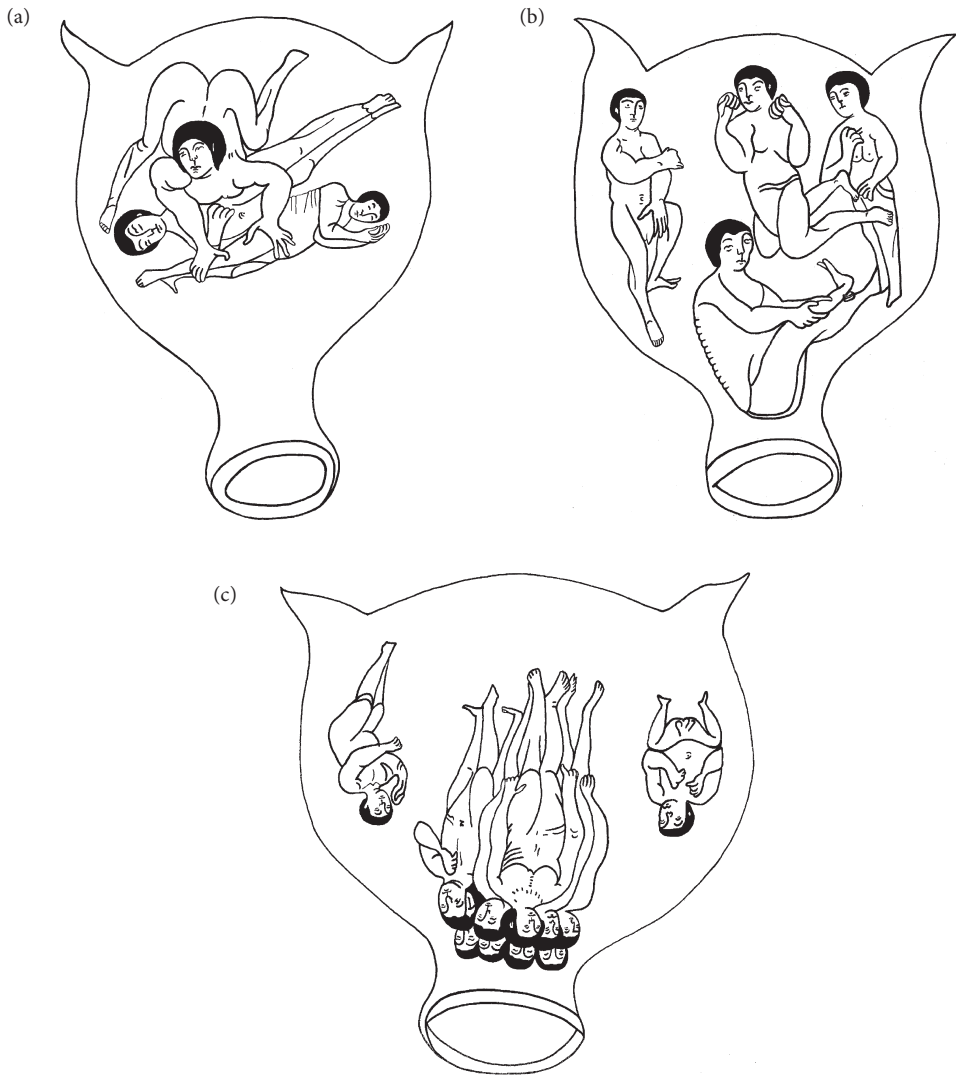


FIGURE 1.1 Ninth-century manuscript, illustrating the different positions of the child in the womb. Bibliothèque royale, Codex Bruxellensis Lat. 3714, fol. 27 recto, 28 verso, 29 recto. Author's line drawing.

synonymous with prosperity, but with its opposite, famine. However, no law seems to have prescribed the killing or exposure of quadruplets and quintuplets as portentous, possibly because these children are numerous but physically normal.

In the Roman republican period, abnormal physical marks are interpreted as signs that manifest a rupture of cosmic order, the *pax deorum*. Malformed children are dangerous. Their birth announces a calamity threatening the whole community, like war or sterility, and they are ritually put to death (see Laes in this volume).

In his *Book of Prodigies*, Julius Obsequens reports several births of children with supernumerary limbs who are very likely conjoined twins, such as a boy in Rhegion with four hands, feet, eyes, and ears and two sexual organs. This case is interesting because two successive deaths were inflicted on the child. We read that “the boy was burned by order of the soothsayers, and his ashes were thrown into the sea” (*Liber prodigiorum* 25). The superstitious fear aroused by physical abnormality seems to have declined under the Empire, and the elite acquired human “monsters” as pleasant human curiosities. Two cases may refer to public show. Pliny reports that in Egypt “it was decided to rear a portent, a boy with two eyes at the back of his head, although he could not see with them” (*HN* 11.272). In the *City of God*, Augustine describes a boy born in the East “with his upper limbs double, but with a single set of lower limbs.” The boy lived long enough “to attract many visitors,” which may allude to some freak exhibition (*De civ. Dei* 16.8; Dasen 2005a: 275–7).

THE LENGTH OF PREGNANCY

The question of the delivery term was much debated, especially because of its legal issues. It was widely assumed that birth could take place any time between the seventh and tenth months of pregnancy (Arist. *Gen. An.* 772 b7–11). Medical authors recognized two types of pregnancy—a shorter one of seven months and a longer one lasting ten months—a reasoning based on numerological speculations based on seven-day periods attributed to Pythagoras (e.g., Censorinus *De die natali* 9). The seven-month child, though weaker, was likely to survive, whereas the eight-month child could not live (Hippoc. *Carn.* 19, 8.612.1–10 Littré).

Ann Hanson (1987: 600) demonstrates the social importance of this convention in a society of high infant mortality, relieving the responsibility of the mother and of those who attended the delivery. Other medical authors rely not on theory but on their observations. In the embryological calendar of Damastes, *On the Care of Pregnant Women and of Infants*, the eight-month child is viable (Parker 1999). Oribasius (fourth century CE) asserts that there is no fixed length of pregnancy and that delivery can take place any time after 184 days and before 204 days of pregnancy (*Collectiones medicae* 22.3).

From a legal point of view, both a child born seven months after a *iustum matrimonium* (legal marriage) and a child born ten months after a divorce or the husband's death were thus considered legitimate (*Dig.* 1.5.12: Paul, *Responsa*, 19).⁵ Aristotle admits that some could reach even eleven months (*HA* 584a36–584b1), as did the emperor Hadrian for a widow “of undoubted chastity” who gave birth eleven months after the death of her husband (Aul. Gell. *NA* 3.16.12; cf. Pliny *HN* 7.40 on a suspicious thirteenth-month child). Lifelong molar pregnancies, attributed to a failure in the conception process, are

⁵ *Twelve Tables*, 4.4 (in M. H. Crawford, *Roman Statutes II*, Institute of Classical Studies, 1996); *Dig.* 38.16.3.11 (Ulpian).

recorded by Hippocratic authors (*Morb. mul.* 1.71, 8.148–50 Littré; 2.178, 8.360–2 Littré; MacClive and King 2007).

OBSTETRIC TEXTBOOKS

Many Hippocratic treatises are concerned with gynecology and obstetrics (e.g., *De natura muliebri*; *Morb. Mul.* I-II; *De genitura*; *Nat. puer.*; *De superfetatione*), but the first extended treatise on gynecology and pediatrics, *Gynaikeia*, was written in Greek by Soranus of Ephesus (first–second century CE; Hanson and Green 1994; Gourevitch 1996). Its importance is evidenced by its survival through Latin translations and adaptations in late antiquity, such as the *Gynaecia* of Theodorus Priscianus and of Caelius Aurelianus (late fourth or early fifth century CE). The Latin version by Muscio, an African writer (sixth century CE), is in the catechistic form of a dialogue, which had a profound influence on the training of midwives in the medieval and early modern periods.

Soranus' treatise was illustrated with schemata showing figures of the fetus in utero. The ancients knew different types of presentation of the child: cephalic or head presentation, podalic or foot presentation, transverse or breech position, doubled up or hips presentation. Soranus had successfully experimented with the turning of the fetus, changing an abnormal position by introducing the hand to turn it and gently pull it out. The procedure is fully described in his *Gynaikeia*; each case was illustrated to teach the midwife how to proceed in cases of dystocia, "for we see many alive who have been thus born with difficulty" (4.8[60]; Bonnet-Cadilhac 2004). These illustrations are transmitted in Muscio's abridged version in about twenty manuscripts, ranging from the ninth to the fifteenth century, sometimes with little left from the original text (Hanson and Green 1994: 1073). The most ancient illustrated version is a ninth-century CE manuscript kept in Brussels Bibliothèque royale (Bonnet-Cadilhac 1988). Muscio added a diagram of the uterus and fifteen depictions reviewing the different positions of the child. The aim of the pictures is mnemonic: the images focus on the child's position in the womb for obstetrical care, explained in the text. The uterus is shaped like a round vessel or bag, with horns at the top. Neither the umbilical cord nor the amniotic membranes nor the placenta are shown. The fetus is not realistically depicted: it is a male adult, floating freely in the uterus, in various positions, like a gymnast (Bonnet-Cadilhac 1995). This iconographic tradition was to last a long time in medieval and modern medical textbooks. Apart from the malposition of the child, multiple births are depicted as they can also cause difficult labor: there are triplets in various transverse positions; quadruplets in feet or breech presentations; and the extraordinary picture of twelve fetuses, possibly those cited by Aristotle (Figures 1.1a–1.1c).

When delivery of the child was not possible, it was not caesarean section but rather embryulcia or embryotomy that was practiced to save the life of the mother. Soranus details how to extract the child, a procedure already known by the Hippocratics (Sor.

Gyn. 4.9[61]; Hippoc. *De superfetatione* 7, 8.480–1 Littré; *De excisione foetus* 1–2, 8.512–15 Littré; Celsus *Med.* 7.29). Archeology confirms the practice. In Poundbury (Dorset), excavations of a third-century cemetery revealed a coffin containing the skeleton of a full-term child who was dismembered because of obstetrical complications. The circumstances of the surgical intervention can be reconstructed thanks to the cut marks on the bones. The practitioner resorted to the procedure described by Soranus: the child had a large head and was malpositioned, with an arm presentation. Never actually born, it received, however, a proper burial. The skeleton, cut into pieces, was buried in a coffin, alone, which suggests that the mother survived (Gourevitch 2004; Redfern and Gowland 2012: 121–3, fig. 7.3).

ABORTION

The Hippocratic oath, whether a genuine medical fifth-century work or of Pythagorean origin, contains objections to abortion (*phthorion*): “Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion.”

Since antiquity, the precise meaning of the sentence has been debated. Did the author prohibit induced abortion altogether, implying that the unborn was already a human being since the time of conception, as in Pythagorean theories? Or was the ban limited to the stages after the formation of the fetus? Aristotle (*Pol.* 1335b24) thus admits that miscarriage can be induced during the first stage of growth, “before sense and life begin.”

Did the author of the oath object to specific practices, implicitly allowing others? Most likely, the ban was specifically on abortifacient pessaries, because they were dangerous for the health (Bodiou 2005), but we know that other equally risky methods such as oral drugs, surgery, and mechanical means were used. To demonstrate the ambiguity of the stipulation, Soranus (*Gyn.* 1.60) cites the case of Hippocrates, who advised a prostitute how to abort by leaping with heels up to the buttocks (*Nat. puer.* 13, 7.488–92 Littré).

The moral authority of the oath is evidenced in the Roman imperial era and was associated with the Hippocratic concern “to help or at least to do no harm” (Hippoc. *Epid.* 1.11; cf. Apul. *Met.* 10.11; Scribonius Largus, *Compositiones, Praef.* 5.20–3). Soranus of Ephesus dedicated a chapter to contraception and abortion that reveals how a practitioner could interpret the ban on abortion recommended by the Hippocratic oath. He distinguishes between a contraceptive (*atokion*), which “does not let conception take place,” and an abortive (*phthorion*) or “expulsive” (*ekbolion*), which “destroys what has been conceived” (*Gyn.* 1.60). Such clear differentiation, however, was most likely not the rule, as the process of conception was extended and the borderline between contraception and abortion was not clear. Soranus agrees to both methods, preferring contraception “since it is safer to prevent conception from taking place than to destroy the fetus” (*Gyn.* 1.60). He recommends abortion for therapeutic reasons only, when the health of the mother is endangered, and condemns it for aesthetic reasons or for the protection

of an adulterous relationship. His description of various contraceptive and abortive methods includes the composition of vaginal suppositories (1.61–5). The question of the efficacy of the recommended drugs, and their relation to “women’s knowledge,” is still much disputed (Riddle 1997; King 1998: 132–56).

In ancient Greece as in Rome, abortion was not illegal. As with abandoned newborn babies, it was an entirely private decision; neither aborted nor newborn babies had their own right to life before the social recognition by the father about one week after delivery (Dasen 2011). The status of the aborted fetus is mainly defined according to its formation stage. In the sacred law from Cyrene (fourth century BCE), pollution (*miasma*) differs according to whether the fetus has recognizable form or not (*SEG* 9.72, 24–7; transl. Parker 1983: 346). The pollution of a fetus with visible limbs is equated with death, but the pollution of a shapeless fetus is attenuated and brings only birth impurity; the house is polluted for three days, as stated in Coan inscriptions (*LSCG* 154 A; Parker 1983: 48–52).

The absence of legal provision until the early third century CE is consistent with the uncertainties of the human status of the unborn displayed in medical and philosophic literature. In Roman law, the legality of abortion is mainly questioned for the protection of the husband’s rights when it is induced against his will. The child is protected not as an independent human being but as a potential heir.

The historicity of legal restrictions before the third century is debated. Though abortion was a threat to the state, no actual law seems to have condemned it. It was grounds for divorce in a law of Romulus (*Plut. Rom.* 22.3) and led to condemnation to death in the special case of a woman in Miletus (*Cic. Clu.* 32; Eyben 1980–1981: 21–2). At the beginning of the third century (198–211 CE), a rescript of Septimius Severus and Caracalla for the first time took measures against induced abortion, which was punished with temporary exile. This was still because of the damage to the husband and not to the child’s rights (*Dig.* 47.11.4, Marcian; 48.8.8, Ulpian; cf. 48.19.39, Tryphoninus). This was followed by a ban on the selling of abortifacients, punished by death if the mother passed away (*Dig.* 48.19.38.5, Paulus = *Paul. Sent.* 5.23.14). Measures against children’s exposure were first decreed in 374 CE and perhaps equated with homicide (see Evans Grubbs in this volume). Kapparis relates the changing attitudes to abortion to the demographic concern of the emperors (Kapparis 2002: 184–5). Were they also associated with an intensified perception of fetal life as the beginning of human life? At the time of Augustus’ legislation on the family, Ovid expresses for the first time a clear condemnation of abortion in two poems (*Am.* 2.13, 14). He may have voiced a collective growing respect for all forms of life in the early empire. He compares the destruction of the fetus with the murder of young children. The women behaved like Medea or Procne; the mother’s death caused by the procedure is a punishment. His disapproval captures contemporary perceptions of the fetus as an independent being with a right to life; Juvenal refers to “humans (*homines*) killed in the womb” by elite Roman women (*Sat.* 6.597), whereas Vergil describes the weeping “souls of unborn children (*infantes*)” (*Aen.* 6.427–9; Eyben 1980–1981: 51–6; Kapparis 2002: 148–9). On the other hand, a medical doctor such as Galen could unemotionally record the common training exercise of “dissecting bodies of exposed

infants” in his treatise *On anatomical procedures* (*De anatomicis administrationibus* 3.5; transl. Ch. Singer 1956; 2.386 Kühn).

LIFE IN UTERO

Various written and iconographic sources confirm the existence of a collective image of the unborn child as a potential individual distinct from the mother, requiring protection and not just a passive part of the maternal viscera.

An already accepted child was part of the family and kinship system, thanks to exchanges in the womb not only with the mother but also the father and even the gods. In classical antiquity, as today, a baby could be born with a purple-reddish mark on the skin, a discoloration or raised area of various sizes and shapes, called *elaia* or *semeion* in Greek and *naevus* or *macula* in Latin (Dasen 2009a). The most common explanation is that the mark corresponds to the food desired or consumed by the pregnant woman. This long-lived idea is related to medical texts that explain the influence of maternal food on the development of the embryo, claiming it is capable of determining the sex or the morphology of the child. Thus, eating hot and dry food, or cock’s testicles, can produce a boy (Pliny *NH* 30.123), a shrewmouse will produce black eyes (Pliny *NH* 30.134), and food that is too salty will produce “children lacking nails” (Pliny *NH* 6.42). The idea is already expressed in the Hippocratic treatise *On Superfetation*, 18: “If a pregnant woman wishes to eat earth or coal, and she does so, a mark will appear on the head of the child at birth as a result.”

Exchanges act both ways, and the embryo can also influence the mother’s appearance. A Hippocratic *Aphorism* thus states: “If a woman be going to have a male child she is of a good complexion; if a female, of a bad complexion” (*Aphorismi* 5.42, Littré 4.546). This observation relies on the common assumption that males are healthier for the pregnant woman (e.g., *De superfetatione* 19, Littré 8.486; Hanson 2004, 2008: 98). In the pseudo-Galenic treatise *To Gaurus, on How Embryos Are Animated* (5.1–2), the mother’s needs stem from the uncontrolled wish of the child who becomes marked if the mother is not given the food that it desires.

Maternal blood not only feeds but also shapes the fetus, a process that continues after birth when uterine blood becomes milk (Aul. Gell. *NA* 12.1.12), which explains the concern about finding the right woman for breastfeeding (Dasen 2010a; see also Parkin in this volume). This nourishing blood can even create kinship between two fathers through a common wife, as illustrated by the story of Cato the Younger, who gave his wife, Marcia, to his best friend, Quintus Hortensius, because Hortensius wanted to have “common children” through a common womb (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 25.4–5). It is one of the earliest occurrences of the idea, best known as telegency, that a womb is forever transformed by sexual relationships (Wilgaux 2010). In the story told by Plutarch, sharing a common womb would provide a common identity to Hortensius and Cato’s children, as if Hortensius had children by Cato himself.

The paternal contribution to the child is present in other discourses where the father is deemed responsible for birthmarks that become hereditary and part of family identity. These paternal marks have specific shapes. Aristotle enumerates some of these congenital signs (*semeia*), such as the star on the shoulder of the descendants of Pelops or the spear of the Spartoi, the men sown from dragon's teeth (*Poet.* 16.21, 1454 b; schol. Pind. *Ol.* 1.40c). These marks are transmitted in a patrilineal way.

Some hereditary marks can also come from gods who substitute for the father and determine the future of the child, which is usually male. Seleucos I Nicator (358–281 BCE) was thus engendered by Apollo, who left a ring with the picture of an anchor that was also printed on the baby's thigh. The mark was transmitted to his descendants, and the anchor was adopted as a dynastic emblem on coins and as a signet ring (App. *Syr.* 56–60). In Rome, the best example concerns the emperor Augustus, who was born with birthmarks concentrated on the chest and the belly, “corresponding in form, order and number with the stars of the Bear in the heavens” (Suet. *Aug.* 80). The constellation designated the child as a future *kosmokrator* (ruler of the universe).

An anticipated family life, with many actors—mother, father, friends, and gods—starts in utero. The child may be born with a family memory and identity inscribed in the flesh. Birthmarks functioned as naming elements in ancient Rome, such as Gnaeus after *naevus*, or other inherited bodily defects and skin anomalies, such as Cicero, with a “bean-shaped anomaly,” or Verrucius, “with a wart” (Dasen 2009a).

By accident, nonkin can also interfere and influence the prenatal formation of the child. The belief that the mother's visual impressions could influence the fetus is a long-lived one. Soranus explains that her imagination is capable of shaping the fetus. Women who saw a monkey during intercourse “have borne children resembling monkeys” (*Gyn.* 1.10.39). The influence can be positive: the misshapen (and anonymous) tyrant of Cyprus is believed to have “compelled his wife to look at beautiful statues during intercourse and became the father of well-shaped children” (*Gyn.* 1.10.39). Hence, women should be sober before having intercourse because drunkenness could engender fantasies resulting in the malformation of the child. Similarly, a child can be born white from a black mother, as happened to the Ethiopian Queen Persinna who, in the novel by Heliodorus, gave birth to a white daughter because she gazed at a painting of the white heroine Andromeda (*Aethiopica* 10.12–16, third–fourth century CE; Gourevitch 1987; Maire 2004).

DISPLAYING THE INVISIBLE

Besides written sources, a number of iconographic documents reveal a collective perception of life in utero, presenting the unborn child in symbolic and imaginary forms. Sanctuaries from Etruria and central Italy have yielded thousands of terracotta offerings to healing deities dating to the Roman conquest. Among the representations of body parts, some depict internal organs, mainly the womb (Macintosh Turfa 2006). The typology varies from one site to another. Most objects are elongated with an opening, resembling a wineskin (*utriculus*) (Pliny *NH* 11.209: *utriculus unde dictus uterus*;



FIGURE 1.2 Terracotta model of uterus with two balls from Vulci—Fontanile di Lignesina. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Toscana. Photo after G. Baggieri (ed.), *L'antica anatomia nell'arte dei donaria*. Rome: MelAMi, 1999. fig. 69. With permission.

Hippoc. *Epid.* 6.5.11; *Morb. mul.* 1.61). The folds may reproduce those of a wineskin, or they could evoke delivery contractions and hence relate to the wish to have an easy childbirth. Examples from Vulci, Gravisca, and Tarquinia contained one or two small terracotta balls of a ca. 1–2 cm diameter (Figure 1.2) (Baggieri 1999: fig. 69). Votive offerings usually show a healthy organ and representations of pessaries are unlikely. Did the balls symbolize a wish for motherhood, suggesting attention to the initial phase of intra-uterine life? They could also refer to fecundity in a generic way and not to a specific stage of conception. They probably do not relate to a wish to have twins. Their multiplication may have symbolically aimed at having numerous descendants.

The image of a ball or little bell as a metaphor for pregnancy is found in Greek lapidaries on the property of stones. The most famous example is that of aetite or eagle stone (*lithos aetites*), a sort of geode that ancient authors describe as a hollow stone pregnant with another, smaller, stone, allegedly found in an eagle's nest (e.g., Pliny *NH* 10.12, 30.130; Dasen 2004). By sympathetic magic, the aetite was believed to prevent miscarriage when it was attached to pregnant women and had to be removed to ease childbirth (Pliny *NH* 36.39; see also 36.151, 37.154, 163, 180; Dioscorides 5.160). The expression *eagle stone* may come from a confusion or from an intentional word play between two Akkadian words, *eru*, to be pregnant, and the substantive *eru*, the eagle (Stol 2000: 50–1). In western Europe, it was used until the nineteenth century as an amulet against miscarriage and to help childbirth (Dasen 2014). Greek and Roman anthropomorphic rattles may relate to this symbolism. Concealed in a feminine figure, the spherical bell could represent the unborn child of a pregnant woman (for rattles, see also Harlow in this volume). Terracotta rattles associated with fecundity rites, such as the piglets offered to Demeter in Southern Italy (fifth–fourth centuries BCE), could have a similar symbolism (Dasen 2004).

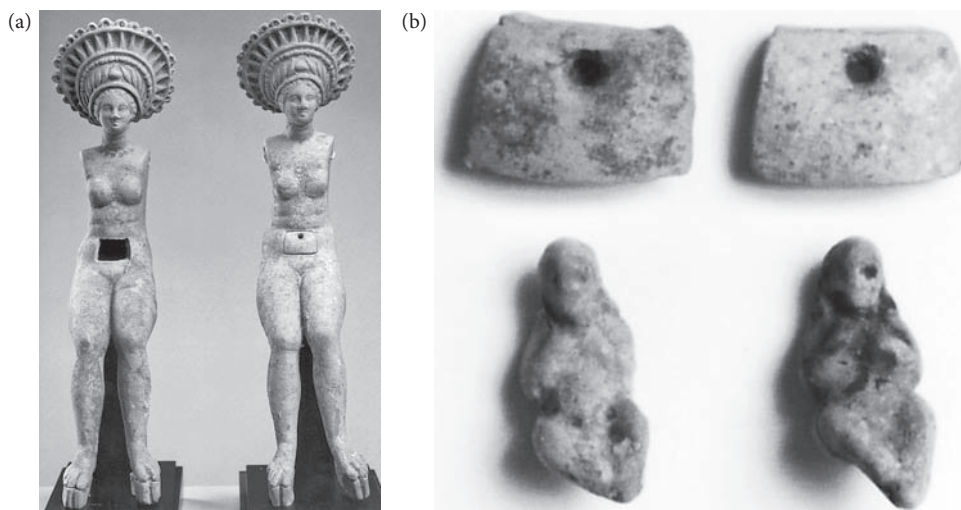


FIGURE 1.3 (a and b): Seated figurine with baby in the belly (H. 20 cm). Würzburg, Martin-von-Wagner Museum ZA 147 (Nereus Collection). Martin-von-Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg, Photo K. Öhrlein. With permission.

Depictions of pregnant women are very rare (Ducaté-Paarmann 2005). Two terracotta figurines with a removable child in the belly are exceptional (Figure 1.3a; second century BCE). Probably made in Myrina (Asia Minor), these depict seated women with articulated arms, adorned with jewels and crowned with tall headdresses. Both the hieratic pose of the figures and their elaborate crowns suggest that the women represent a goddess, perhaps Aphrodite, characterized by jewelry and seductive sandals with platform soles. The child is hidden behind a lid cut in the belly; his form is chubby, with his fists held to his chest, and his legs are bent, suggesting his weakness (Figure 1.3b). The figurines, which are not children's toys, could be manipulated. The rendering is not realistic, and their purpose was not anatomical instruction. The women have idealized divine bodies with flat bellies; no internal organs are rendered. The fetus floats in a symbolic womb; it has no umbilical cord but the proportions of a real child. The Myrina figurines could represent the double of a deceased young woman, with a new appeasing symbolism, realizing a hope for maternity (Dasen 2010b).

PROTECTING THE EMBRYO

There were also prebirth votive rites. Various sources show that the unborn child benefited from divine protection, attesting the recognition of his existence as an individual living being. Vows could be made for an embryo, as the Senate did for the

daughter of Nero and Poppaea still “in the womb” (Tac. *Ann.* 15.23; Cazanove 2008). It was not uncommon to talk to an unborn child: Vergil speaks to a messianic embryo, *modo nascenti puero* (*Ecl.* 4.8); Martial speaks to a soon aborted heir (*Ep.* 6.3.1–4). In Chariton’s novel, Callirhoe similarly talks to her unborn child about its fate (*Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 2.8, 11.1–3; Hanson 2008: 107).

In Roman religion, numerous deities (*indigitamenta*) watch over conception, fetal growth, and delivery. Marcus Terentius Varro in his *Antiquitates rerum divinarum* (first century BCE) must have provided the list that is partly transmitted by Tertullian (second century CE; *Ad Nat.* 2.11.1–6), Arnobius (third century CE; *Adv. Nat.* 4.7–8), and Augustine (fifth century CE; *De civ. Dei* 4.11, 7.2). Entities such as Vitumnus and Sentinus animate the fetus; Fluvionia, Alemona, and Mena care for its feeding in utero. The position of the child before delivery is watched by Antevorta, Prorsa, and Postvorta (Varro in Aul. Gell. *NA* 16.16.4; Macrobi. *Sat.* 1.7.20; Ov. *Fast.* 1.633–6), whereas Juno Lucina and Candelifera contribute to an easy delivery.⁶ The Carmentes, Nona, Decima, the Fates, and the Parcae foretell its future at birth.⁷

Various spells and amulets were used to protect the embryo (Aubert 1989, 2004; Frankfurter 2006). Depictions of the unborn child are found on magical gems from the Roman imperial period (second–third century CE); these semiprecious stones are inscribed with protective signs (*characteres*), magical formulae (*logoi*), and divine figures often composed of Egyptian and Greco-Roman elements. A large series concerns the protection of the uterus. They are usually engraved on hematite or “bloodstone,” which was believed to control flows of blood by sympathetic magic. Red jasper was valued for similar reasons.

The gems provide a metaphorical representation of uterine life, mingling Greek and Egyptian elements. In their simplest form, the gems feature an upside down pot, which represents the womb as a medical cupping vessel. Wavy lines on the top and bottom “animate” the vessel; they may depict in a stylized way the ligaments and uterine tubes discovered by Herophilus at Alexandria. The scene is encircled by the *ouroboros*, creating a magical space that protects the uterus and the child against malevolent forces. The reverse bears the name Ororiouth, an entity specific to the world of magicians that helps loosening and delivery.⁸ Other gems carry longer formulae, abridged versions of complex spells found in magical papyri, such as the *soroor* formula that refers to an entity presiding over delivery.⁹

Other iconographic elements relate to medical concerns. At the mouth of the cupping vessel, a key with a varying number of teeth symbolizes the opening and closing

⁶ At the Lupercalia: Ov. *Fast.* 2.435–52. Matronalia: Ov. *Fast.* 3.245–58; Varro *Ling.* 5.67–9; Augustine *De civ. Dei* 4.11, 21, 34.

⁷ Aul. Gell. *NA* 3.16.10; Tert. *An.* 37; Aubert 1989, 2004; Dasen 2009, 2011; see also McWilliam in this volume.

⁸ See, for example, the hematite in a private collection; Dasen 2007: 44–5, figs. 1a–b, with illustrations of further gems of the same type.

⁹ See, for example, the hematite in London, British Museum G 496; Dasen 2007, 48–9, figs. 3a–b.

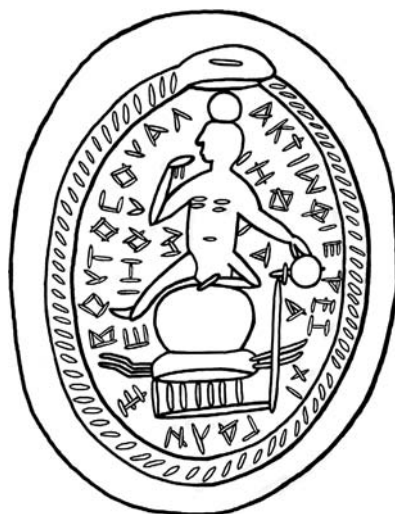


FIGURE 1.4 Red carnelian gem with Horus seated on a uterus and holding a key. Ex coll. C. Bonner 141, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library. With permission.

mechanism of the womb that was so central in ancient gynecology. Different movements must happen at the proper time: the womb must open periodically to release menses, attract male seed, then close to retain it and prevent miscarriage or loss of food for the embryo (for comparison to a cupping device, see Arist. *Gen. An.* 2.4.739a–b). At the time of delivery, the womb opens again to release the child. The key symbolically prevented any loss of control of the womb, and the frightening risks of hemorrhage were warded off by the staunching power of the hematite. In the Italico-Roman world, keys were deposited as offerings to ask or give thanks for an easy delivery.¹⁰

Different deities, mostly Egyptian, appear on the gems. All are endowed with special powers relating to pregnancy and childbirth, such as Isis, the mother of the divine child Horus-Harpocrates; the ram-headed god Chnum, who was believed to shape embryos on his potter's wheel; and the dwarf-god Bes, the guardian of intrauterine life as well as of early childhood. They may surround Horus-Harpocrates, who symbolizes a fully formed embryo, ready to be born (Dasen 2007).

The function of the gems was also to protect the matricial space from the deeds of malignant entities coming at night to inject a harmful substance capable of provoking a malformation or abortion of the child. The most dreaded of these was the god Seth, whose seed is compared to the poison of the scorpion. A series of gems refers to Seth as an ithyphallic donkey, vanquished by a woman in a birthing position waving a club who was equated with Omphale. A verbal pun is associated with the visual play. The woman

¹⁰ Festus, *De verborum significatu* 49.1L; for keys from Republican votive deposits, some of which have explicit inscriptions, see Dasen and Ducaté-Paarmann 2006.

and the donkey use the same weapons, because the Greek word *skutale* means “the club” and, metaphorically, “the phallus” (Dasen 2008b).

Some gems were *okytokia*, amulets for quick birthing. On a cornelian, Horus the child shown is seated on the uterus and holding the key, as if he controls the moment of his birth (Figure 1.4). The idea that the full-term child initiates its birth is explained in the Hippocratic *Eight Months’ Child*: the child becomes restless when the time of delivery approaches because it lacks food in the womb; its movements provoke the birthing process. Like a chick emerging from its shell, it vigorously breaks the membranes with its feet, causing labor pains (Hippoc. *Nat. puer.* 30.1, 7.530–2 Littré). A red jasper gem with the inscription *epi podia*, “onto your little feet,” explicitly urges the embryo to leave the womb (Hanson 2004: 267–8; 2008: 106).

FETAL AND NEONATAL DEATH

Archeology confirms the possibility that the embryo was perceived as an anticipated family member. Long believed to be neglected, fetuses and full-term children benefited from distinct burial practices in ancient Greece as in the Roman world. The frequent absence from common cemeteries of infants under the age of one year is now explained by their presence in other places such as in reserved areas of the necropolis or in a separate collective location outside the adult cemetery (Carroll 2012: 42–6; Simon et al. 2011); they can also be found in domestic places, within settlements and buildings (Blaizot 2003; Baills and Blanchard 2006; Redfern and Gowland 2012).

On the island of Astypalaia in the Dodecanese, over 2,770 fetuses and newborn babies have been found inhumed in pots in a cemetery in use from the Geometric period (ca. 750 BCE) to the Roman era, at the margin of the ancient town and clearly separated from the communal burial ground on the opposite hill (Figure 1.5). A sanctuary of Artemis Lochia, mentioned in local inscriptions, may have presided over the purification rituals of the mothers (Hillson 2009; Michalaki Kollia 2010).

In the Roman world, many sites show similar patterns. Burials of children under the age of six months are relatively rare in communal cemeteries, but this may vary according to the sites.¹¹ Not yet a fully social being, the neonate can remain in the domestic sphere, inhumed near or in the house. The status of the infant seems to change between six months to one year of age when teeth appear, solid food is introduced, and speech develops, marking a new step in family life. Some offerings aimed at providing them access to the other world, for example with a funerary coin (Dasen 2009b: figs. 8a–b). Infanticide is suggested by other methods of disposal, as with the hundreds of babies,

¹¹ Inhumation is usual; Pliny the Elder *NH* 7.72 states that children have their first teeth at 6 months old and that it is a “universal custom” not to cremate a person who dies before cutting his teeth. However, cremated newborns are also found in some regions, such as Roman Africa; Bénichou-Safar 2005. On Roman Gaul and Italy, see Carroll 2012: 42.



FIGURE 1.5 *Enchytrismoi* (pots) for burial of fetuses and neonates in the Kylindra necropolis at Astypalaia. ©M. Michallaki Kollia. Oral permission received.

some with malformations, in a well in Hellenistic Athens (see the chapter by Liston and Rotroff in this volume) or in a sewer in Roman Ashkelon (see Evans Grubbs in this volume). Information about the ritual handling of placenta is emerging. Placenta may have been buried in separate pots, as suggested by the study of the vessels from the newborns' Roman cemetery in Chartres (France) (Simon et al. 2011: 555; cf. Ade 2009; Papaikononou and Huysecom-Haxhi 2009).

A commonly held belief must be dismissed: premature deaths are attributed to malevolent entities (Sorlin 1991; Johnston 1995), but no ancient author describes them as restless souls disturbing and threatening the living. This idea originates in Christian baptism, which is not the equivalent of the Greek and Roman naming days (e.g., Jobbé-Duval 1924: 70; Cumont 1949). Almost no material associated with black magic, such as curse tablets (*katadesmoi* or *defixiones*), has been found in babies' graves (Baills-Talbi and Dasen 2008). Malevolent untimely dead (*aoroi*) were believed to be older children in whom parents and the community had invested disappointed hopes. The exceptional use of fetuses in sorcery depended on the impurity of a corpse that had been removed from its burial place (on a binding spell involving a fetus, *P. Mich.* VI 423–4; on an actual wrapped fetus of fourteen weeks in Kellis, Frankfurter 2006). As David

Frankfurter (2006: 50, n. 27) notes, Christian apocalyptic texts are the first to allude to the avenging power of aborted or stillborn children. In contrast, as we have seen, the Poundbury child was simply but duly buried, like the thousands of fetuses and newborn children in Astypalaia.

CONCLUSION

No general agreement existed about the status of the embryo, but there was a plurality of viewpoints according to different perspectives—medical, philosophical, legal—and to gender. For men, the unborn child was first a potential heir, if possible male; for women, an unseen exchange could start very early, with the first movements, creating family bonds in utero.

Material culture reflects this perception of the embryo as a living being, worthy of divine protection and directly addressed. An important key to understanding the recognition of the fetus as a potential person, not yet independent but distinct from the mother, is its preaccepted status as a desired child. As Frankfurter (2006) demonstrates, the construction of this prenatal status implies that a recognition process is initiated before delivery, well evidenced by a number of prebirth rites and amulets. In this sense, a full rite of passage is completed at birth, making the transition between the potential and new full human status. The midwife, the human counterpart of the Parcae, presided over its entry into the human life by cutting the umbilical cord (Dasen 2011). The next step was the naming day, which took place between seven to ten days after birth, marking the child's entry into the collectivity and the social recognition by the father of his new paternal status (Dasen 2009b). This anticipated status of the embryo as an individual also explains funerary practices: as with a full-term baby, an embryo could be mourned and safeguarded through a mortuary passage like older children.

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CHAPTER 2

THE DEMOGRAPHY OF INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

TIM PARKIN

INTRODUCTION

I have never seen a cradle without thinking of a grave.

So declared the then twenty-five-year-old Gustave Flaubert, in a letter of August 8, 1846, to his mistress, Louise Colet.¹ It is a reaction that I suspect would not have seemed out of place to an ancient Greek or Roman, faced with a very real awareness of the perils of life, not least for the very young. Marcus Aurelius expresses a not wholly dissimilar idea in the second century CE in his *Meditations*: “When you kiss your child at night, whisper in your heart: ‘Perhaps it will be dead in the morning.’”² Here the emperor is quoting from Epictetus, but he was not thinking only of the theoretical. Indeed, we know that Marcus Aurelius and his wife, Faustina, had thirteen or fourteen children in total; of these many offspring, only one male, Commodus, survived to adulthood (when he executed his sister Lucilla).

As one of the editors of this volume the last thing I want to do, so early on and after we have made such a positive start with birth, is to plunge us into the depressing depths of death! Having said this, however, I firmly believe that, for most people in the ancient world, death was an omnipresent reality that played on minds and affected lives deeply and constantly. It was part of life, part of the natural course of events; such reflections

¹ *Oeuvres complètes de Gustave Flaubert: Correspondence, I (1830–46)*, Paris: Louis Conard, 1926: 221.

² *Meditations* 11.34, with Rutherford 1989: 38, 93, 121–2, 163; cf. Epictetus *Discourses* 3.24.84–8, with Long 2002: 248–9.

were not the sole property of the philosopher, even if that is where today we find the idea most commonly expressed in the ancient testimony. Indeed, Marcus Aurelius goes on to quote Epictetus further. When someone responded to his observation on the fragility of the life of a child, saying that these are words of ill omen, Epictetus is said to have replied: “No, nothing that is the work of Nature is of ill omen, just as it is not of ill omen to say that the corn has been reaped” (Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* 11.34).

So if now we focus for some time on death, it is not to inspire gloom but to emphasize how significant a factor death, and demographic factors in general, was to the reality of the living experience of children in the ancient world. My focus here is not on death per se; my interest is very much in the living. The intention is not to make a detailed statistical study of the demography of childhood in antiquity but to highlight the significance of demographic aspects to our understanding of children and childhood in the past as well as to modify some of my own earlier assumptions and assertions about childhood mortality in antiquity. The topic is gloomy, perhaps, but also essential. As the chapters in this volume make clear, there are a wide variety of possible approaches to exploring the history of children and childhood. The history of sentiment and relationships has perhaps been the most common one to date and may often lead a modern reader to reflect on the similarities of ideas and attitudes over the course of the millennia. However, the demographic approach becomes all the more significant in this context when we realize how much has *changed* over the course of time, particularly within the last two centuries and within the so-called developed world. I would argue, in fact, that the “sentimental” and the demographic approaches are intimately linked: for example, in considering the emotional relationship between parents and children it is vital to consider the demographic realities in terms of mortality and fertility, mapping demographic factors onto economic and social histories of childhood. At the same time, it is not a case of constructing simplistic equations: high mortality, for example, need not mean low affection.³

A WORLD OF CHILDREN

Demographic realities shape—but do not necessarily dictate—every aspect of childhood; they affect and mold the “contours” of children’s lives. One very important reality to realize from the outset is that there were an awful lot of children in antiquity, at least as a proportion of the overall population. To put it crudely, it can be estimated that in an ancient society roughly one-third of the population would have been under the age of fifteen years at any one time; the comparable figure today in the developed world is more like 19%. At the other end of the life course, naturally, the opposite would be true;

³ “Did the ancients care when their children died?”—to quote the title of an influential paper by Mark Golden, published in 1988.

while today, for example, around 21% of the population of the United Kingdom or the United States is over the age of sixty years, in the ancient world it would have been more of the order of 7%. These rough calculations are assuming a stationary population, that is, where births are balanced by deaths. If, on the other hand, the population was actually growing, then the proportion of the young would be even larger.⁴ In short, children represented a very large proportion of the ancient population, much larger than we are used to today: classical antiquity was, in that sense, a very young world.

One repercussion of this preponderance is well brought out, for another era, by the social historian and demographer Peter Laslett (1983)—and his words bring to my mind, *inter alia*, scenes from Roman sarcophagi or even the Ara Pacis (cf. Dixon 1992: 177, plate 16; Huskinson 1996: 140, plate 4.4; see also Larsson Lovén in this volume):

In the pre-industrial world there were children everywhere; playing in the village street and fields when they were very small, hanging around the farmyards and getting in the way, until they had grown enough to be given child-sized jobs to do . . . ; forever clinging to the skirts of women in the house and wherever they went and above all crowding round the cottage fires, just as they still do in Malawi, say, or in Kenya, or in Pakistan. The perpetual distraction of childish noise and talk must have affected everyone almost all the time, except of course the gentleman in his study or the lady in her boudoir; incessant interruptions to answer questions, quieten fears, rescue from danger or make peace between the quarrelling . . . (p. 119)

To me this seems very relevant, *mutatis mutandis*, to the ancient world. However invisible, relatively speaking, or relegated to the margins children may appear to us in the extant testimony from the distance of some two millennia, it is highly unlikely that they would have been such a silent presence in reality. It is this noisy hustle and bustle of the young that this volume seeks in part to represent (albeit so often through the eyes of their male elders), and it is just such a presence that the demographic approach can serve to highlight: not death, but life in all its color and noise.

Laslett also raises economic issues in the same section, and these are equally relevant here. While both mothers and fathers were very involved in the rearing of their children (one thinks of the well-known sarcophagus of the second century CE, now in the Louvre, for the involvement of both mother and father in the scenes from the young life of Cornelius Statius⁵), there must inevitably have also been the expectation, below the elite level, that children would contribute to the family economy, in some way or another, at an early age: they could not remain totally dependent (see especially Bradley 1991: 103–24; Laes 2011: 148–221 on child labor). The demands of *pietas* in the Roman context, the expectation that children will return the favor of life and nurture to their

⁴ For the assumptions and calculations underlying these few figures, see Parkin 1992, 2003; note now also Scheidel et al. 2007: 40 and Laes 2011: ch. 2.

⁵ Louvre inv. no. MA659; see, e.g., Dixon 1992: 181, pl. 24; Huskinson 1996: 138, pl. 2.1; Rawson 2003: 107, fig. 2.2; Harlow in this volume.

parents in due course, would not have been reserved only for the old age of the parents (Parkin 1997; see also McWilliam in this volume). One can imagine children performing functions both within and outside the home, alongside the household slaves if they existed; this is both an economic and a social reality, determining also the people children would meet and socialize with, quite aside from their immediate family and their peers.

Indeed, the reality of growing up in this kind of demographic regime meant two rather contrasting but mutually “real” things. Because of high infant and early childhood mortality levels (about which more in due course), your surviving brothers and sisters might be separated from you by a significant number of years; while children were a greater proportion of the population in antiquity than today, the “spacing” of living children over a mother’s reproductive career would typically be greater, quite aside from any intended contraceptive effects (which would have been minimal in my view). In other words, the young child might have found many peers outside his or her home; however, within the home there would not have been huge numbers of siblings, and what other children were co-resident would often have been stepsiblings (as well as slaves) in many cases as a result of remarriage (on this last aspect see especially Bradley 1991).

THE RISKS OF BEING YOUNG

So ancient societies were young and lively places. But in life there was much death, and the presence and reality of death could not be kept distant from one’s early years of life. In this context I have become very interested in ancient sayings relating to the life course, since such adages are often revelatory of popular ideas and morality.⁶ One such saying of relevance to us here, and a proverb that remains popular (thanks to Shakespeare), is that old age is a second childhood. Some have maintained that today the proverb has a positive meaning, in the sense that childhood is a period of safety and by seeing old age as a return to childhood one is implying that death is distant: in effect, people are attempting to disguise the fact that old age is the inevitable prelude to death by seeing life as cyclical and therefore, by implication, continuous, since infancy and childhood are regarded as periods of safety (see Parkin 2011 for references). Now this may or may not be true for modern developed societies, but it overlooks the history of the proverb. In antiquity there must have been a different rationale since infant and early childhood mortality was particularly high in relative terms. To an ancient mind, the link between childhood and old age in demographic terms must have been that both were risky periods of life. Indeed, to cite Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* (9.33) again, the emperor explicitly compares and links the deaths of the very young and the very old, both being natural. Cicero

⁶ On the applicability of such proverbs in wider, ancient contexts, see the excellent study by Morgan 2007.

had already had similar ideas: in his dialogue on old age (*de Sen.* 10.33), he has Cato mention different stages of the life course as follows:

The course of life (*cursus aetatis*) is fixed, and nature admits of its being run but in one way, and only once; and to each part of our life there is something specially seasonable; so that the vulnerability (*infirmetas*) of children (*pueri*), as well as the high spirits (*ferocitas*) of youth (*iuvenes*), the *gravitas* of adult years, and the *maturitas* of old age—all have a certain natural quality which should be secured in its proper season.

In other words, in the ancient world, the first years of life might be associated not with safety but with danger: death was omnipresent as a threat. Children in classical antiquity were a very large proportion of population, and a lot of them were dying.

Ancient art too can serve to remind us of this; for example, one well-known Attic white-ground *lekythos*, now in New York, shows a potent image: the child with his toy roller waves farewell to his mother (or beckons her to come with him?) as he approaches Charon who stands at his left.⁷ One can point to isolated instances from the literary sources where high child mortality rates are recorded, along with high fertility to match it. We have already noted the case of Marcus Aurelius. Perhaps the most famous example is Cornelia, mother of the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus: she had twelve children in all (six boys and six girls—alternately, according to Pliny, *NH* 7.57) and became a symbol and an ideal of maternal fertility and discipline (Dixon 2007). Apparently all twelve children were born between 163 BCE and the death of the father, Tiberius senior, around 152 BCE. Though the literary sources do not tell us whether Cornelia breastfed her children, this would be interesting to know. One might assume that she did, following the traditional notion, though Cicero perhaps suggests otherwise (“her children were raised more by their mother’s speech than at her bosom”; *Brutus* 211; compare also Tacitus *Dial.* 28, *gremio et sinu*). If she did not, it is feasible that she might have conceived very shortly after each birth. At any rate, all her children survived their father, but only three (the two famous boys and one sister) survived childhood and—so it is alleged—none survived their mother. Similar cases of high fertility and high mortality among the upper classes may be pointed to, especially among the Romans (Parkin 1992: 94). Agrippina and Germanicus had nine children (six boys and three girls), only six of whom survived their father. Quintilian laments the loss of his young wife as well as of his two young sons who died at age four and nine years. Marcus Aurelius’ tutor, Fronto, of six children born to his wife, had only one daughter left in his later years. But my favorite example comes from the humbler classes—the tombstone of the wife of a Roman centurion:⁸

⁷ Painter of Munich 2335, ca. 430 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 09.221.44; Oakley 2004: 119.

⁸ *CIL* 3.3572, Aquincum, Pannonia Inferior, second or early third century CE; cf. also *AE* 1989, 247, with Linderski 2007: 374–5, for a third-century CE couple in central Italy (he originally from Pannonia) who have lost six children.

Here do I lie at rest, a married woman, Veturia by name and descent, the wife of Fortunatus, the daughter of Veturius. I lived for thrice nine years, poor me, and I was married for twice eight. I slept with one man (*unicuba*), I was married to one man (*uniuiga*). After having borne six children, one of whom survives me, I died. Titus Julius Fortunatus, centurion of the Second Legion Adiutrix Pia Fidelis, set this up for his wife: she was incomparable and notably respectful to him (*incomparabili et insigni in se pietate*).

As remarkable as such a life seems to us—married at age eleven years, dead by age twenty-seven, having given birth six times and having already lost five of those children—in the ancient world Veturia would have been far from atypical. This was a young world where death was a constant and visible reality.

Such specific examples, interesting as they are, do not help us to measure levels of mortality. That infant and early childhood mortality levels were realized as high is clear enough from a number of ancient references. Aristotle (*Hist. An.* 7.588a8) notes that most child deaths happened in the first year of life and, further, that most of those occurred in the first week (what we now term early neonatal mortality). Hence, he says, parents typically waited a week to name their child. This notion of the first week of life being a period of transition into life is an interesting one to which we shall return at the very end of this chapter. In this context it is worth remembering Plutarch's (in-) famous comment: seven days after birth occurs the loss of the umbilical cord; until then the newborn child is more like a plant than an animal (*Quaest. Rom.* 102, *Mor.* 288c). Macrobius relates that Romans named their children after the first week, on the *dies lustricus* (*Saturnalia* 1.16.36): for a girl this is the eighth day; for a boy the ninth (the day he receives his *bullā*). Plutarch debates why the difference in gender occurs. Perhaps the number nine was suitable for boys because men had three names (the *tria nomina*) and nine is three squared, implying a sense of perfection and completeness. Women in Plutarch's day typically had two names, and two cubed is eight. A cube, he notes, is stable, domestic, and difficult to move, like a woman. Whatever is made of that, Pliny the Elder notes a gender difference in terms of life chances; what he has to say is also illustrative of the precariousness of birth in general and of the concern surrounding it (*NH* 7.37–8, 40–2; cf. Aristotle *Hist. An.* 7.584a–b):

At the birth of twins it is (said to be) rare for the woman giving birth or one of the twins to survive, but if twins are born, one of each sex, it is even more unusual for *either* to survive. Girls are born more swiftly than boys, just as they age more quickly. Males more often move in the womb; males tend to be carried on the right side, females on the left.... A child born before the seventh month is never viable.... For infants born in the eighth month, the period of greatest danger is the first forty⁹ days.... A woman bearing a male child has a better color and an easier delivery; there is movement in the womb on the fortieth day. A woman bearing a girl has totally the opposite symptoms: the weight is hard to carry, there is a slight swelling of the legs and groin, and the first movement is not till the ninetieth day.... If the woman breathes [presumably at the final moment of delivery] delivery is more difficult.

⁹ Cf. Parker 1983: 48, 52, quoting Censorinus *de Die Natali* 11.7.

Indeed *oscitatio* [yawning or gaping] during delivery can be lethal [sc. for the infant], just as a sneeze after copulation causes abortion.

Fear for the life of a woman at delivery must have been common, even if demographically maternal mortality was not as significant as some have supposed (cf. Parkin 1992: 103–5). The following letter from Pliny the Younger (4.21) also highlights the difficulty for the upper classes, including Pliny himself, in ensuring a robust line of succession (on this family see further Rawson 2003: 103; see also McWilliam in this volume):

How tragic and how cruel is the demise of the sisters Helvidiae. Both sisters gave birth to girls, and both sisters died giving birth. I am very upset, and my grief is not immoderate, for I think it is truly grievous when motherhood snatches away two very noble girls in their first flower. I grieve too for the plight of the infants, deprived of their mothers immediately at birth, I grieve for their excellent husbands, and I grieve too on my own account. For my affection for their deceased father [the younger Helvidius Priscus, executed in 93 CE] remains as strong as ever, as my defence of him and my published works bear witness. Now only one of his three children survives, left alone to prop up and sustain a *domus* which not so long ago was secure in its many supports.

Again, this demonstrates the omnipresence of death in this young world. The Augustan legislation on childbearing and on the number of living children required also recognized high infant and early childhood mortality rates (Parkin 1992: 115–9). In fact, the majority of deaths in an ancient society were probably of infants and very young children, despite their relatively low representation on extant tombstone inscriptions. The younger the child, the more vulnerable he or she was, particularly in urban environments. And this was a reality affecting all social classes.

The reasons for such high mortality levels, particularly of infants (in demographic terms, the first year of life) are evident enough (see the excellent overview in Frier 2000: esp. 792–3). While mortality levels will have varied according to seasons (see Shaw 2001), more generally mortality levels varied only by degrees over space and time, for example according to levels of urbanization or to gender; levels of sanitation and hygiene as well as of medical care and of nutrition, together with a lack of the concept of quarantine, all took their toll. Such factors would have resulted in populations that suffered from fevers (typhus, typhoid, malaria); pulmonary complaints (pneumonia, tuberculosis); dysentery and diarrhea; as well as cholera, scurvy, rabies, tetanus, and anthrax: in short, a high mortality regime, with very high infant and early childhood mortality.

MEASURING INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MORTALITY

But how high? Can we quantify? The short answer is no; we have no statistics from the ancient world, at least in this regard (cf. Bagnall and Frier 1994: 34 on the Egyptian

census data). And precise figures are less important, perhaps, than an awareness of the fact that levels were high, nor would any single figure pertain to a world so large in terms of space and time. But it is worth getting a handle on orders of magnitude at the very least. Demographers use the term *infant mortality rate* (IMR) to indicate the number of deaths per thousand live births before the first birthday. An IMR of 200–300 per 1000 is what may be expected from comparative preindustrial history. Note, however, that much higher rates are possible, especially among populations that practice no or only minimal breastfeeding of infants (a point to which we shall return). There is good evidence for more recent historical examples from Europe, in the range of 150–250 per 1000 live births, with extremes as high as 480 per 1000 in six parishes in York in the sixteenth century (Flinn 1981). As an order of magnitude and based on model life tables, the infant mortality rate in the early Roman empire was around 300 per 1000 p.a. (see Parkin 1992: 147 for IMR = 305.56; cf. p. 144 for others' suggestions of higher figures); by age five years, some 45% of children had died (others would have this as high as around 51%; *ibid.*). These figures equate with a life expectancy at birth (e_0) of some twenty-five years; life expectancy at age five years, however, would have been around forty years. In other words, if you survived infancy and early childhood, you could expect to go on to live well into your adult years, if not into old age.

To put this into some context, the IMR in the modern developed world is lower than 10 per 1000 (the current rate in the United Kingdom, for example, is 5.08 per 1000; in the United States the rate is 6.43). The contrast between then and now is indeed stark. The significant drop in the early mortality levels is a relatively recent one, a powerful symbol of the demographic transition that occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as both mortality and fertility rates dropped significantly in the developed, industrialized world.¹⁰ In poorer countries today, however, the IMR still ranges from 90 to almost 200 per 1000. And it is also worth remembering that single figures can disguise much variation within a population, such as between different social classes and between different ethnic groups (to use modern-day United States as an example, see Barusch 2011: 182, figure 6.2); similarly in the ancient world, one can imagine much higher levels of infant and early childhood mortality among poorer families, especially in the most densely populated, urban environments. It must also be stressed that there is more of demographic relevance than just *infant* mortality. Mortality did not recognize a newborn's first birthday: as important as the first birthday is to families (and demographers), it is not the major turning point in terms of mortality risk (in fact, as we shall now discuss, it is quite the red herring). Étienne (1976) said it well: in the face of childhood illnesses up to the age of puberty, ancient medicine would have been a mere spectator (see especially the chapters by Dasen and Dean-Jones in this volume; see also Bradley 2005). The ancient awareness of continued high mortality in early childhood is

¹⁰ See, e.g., Woods 1993: 196 for illustration of this. In the context it is also worth noting that with the demographic transition came increased interest in and concern about infant and childhood mortality levels; note, for example, L. Emmett Holt's 1913 presidential address before the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality—an instructive read one century on.

perhaps nowhere more vividly alluded to than in Rome's ancient customs regarding the mourning of deceased children, as Plutarch records:¹¹

Numa himself also regulated the periods of mourning according to ages. For instance, for a child of less than three years there was to be no mourning at all; for a child older than three years, the mourning was not to last more months than it had lived years, up to ten; and no age was to be mourned longer than that, but ten months was the period for the longest mourning.

As we have already said, chances for a long(ish) life increased dramatically after one survived to one's fifth birthday.

In this context it is also very important to note that the very term infant mortality, the death rate in the first year of life, is also too gross a generalization to be particularly meaningful, especially in a high mortality regime such as was omnipresent in the ancient world. Finer gradations within that first year, *and indeed before birth itself*, are important, and modern terminology is useful in elucidating this. The early days after birth we now term the neonatal period (usually the first month, or twenty-eight days); this is the period where the newborn is affected most by endogenous, in utero conditions and birth trauma, and this is particularly true of the first week after birth, the early neonatal stage. Here major factors in terms of mortality are the degree of prematurity of birth and complications in the birthing process. The postneonatal period, the later months of the first year, are affected more by exogenous, environmental factors, such as rearing practices, levels of poverty within the family and wider community, and levels of exposure to infectious diseases. While postneonatal mortality levels are relatively negligible in developed populations, they remain significant in high mortality regimes, both pretransitional and developing.¹²

It is time to revisit the previously adduced figures for the ancient world, such as an IMR of around 300 per 1000. Such figures are based on model life tables, in particular the Coale-Demeny tables (Coale, Demeny, and Vaughan, 1983) routinely used by historical demographers (see Parkin 1992 for a basic introduction to these tables). The tables researchers have used for the ancient world have usually been from the "West" family, the most generalized model, with average life expectancy at birth between twenty and thirty years. These models provide us with an idea of how ancient populations work and have been used to great effect to recreate population structures and to illustrate family and life course dynamics. (See especially Saller 1994, who makes illuminating use of the work and models of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social

¹¹ Plutarch *Numa* 12.2. Cf. *Fragmenta Vaticana* 321 for the legal use in this context of the Latin verb *sublugere* (to half-mourn).

¹² Again the demographic transition spurred interest in the differentiation of stages of infancy in demographic terms: see especially the pioneering work of the statistician William Farr 1885, including (p. 193) his observations on the high levels of infant mortality in the north of England, as mothers left their children "soon after birth, in order to work at the cotton mills: their infants, thus neglected, soon fell an easy prey to the first disorder that attacked them."

Structure; cf. now also Saller in Scheidel et al. 2007: ch. 4.) But I was, and am, very aware of the weaknesses inherent in such a generalized approach, particularly in terms of the variability of mortality patterns over time and space, a variability that model life tables disguise. In considering mortality levels within a population, it is vitally important to consider the disease environment peculiar to that particular area (and time). In an ancient context, infectious diseases took a very heavy toll, to varying degrees: typhoid, cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, influenza, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and, as we are increasingly coming to realize, malaria.¹³ Other variables from population to population include the level of economic development; the density of habitation the population group enjoyed; the length of birth intervals experienced, intentionally or otherwise, by the society; the swaddling practices employed; and also seasonal mortality patterns, something linked, perhaps, to the rate of abandonment (e.g., if birth occurs at a time of drought as opposed to at harvest time; cf. Evans Grubbs in this volume). All of these factors may have a considerable effect on just how high or low the levels of infant and early childhood mortality may be.¹⁴

There are other problems too with the generalized models I have employed in the past, particularly regarding the ancient context when mortality levels were so high (cf. Scheidel 2001: ch. 1, especially 21–3; also see Akrigg 2011). For very high mortality populations the infant mortality levels have been predicted by algorithmic extrapolation. In other words, the problem is that the Coale-Demeny tables are based on populations where average life expectancy at birth is over thirty-five years. Tables with life expectancy at birth *below* thirty-five years are extrapolated from lower mortality regimes; that is, the models I used in Parkin (1992) for the ancient world are not based on empirical evidence. Coupled with this is that in model life tables the relationship between infant and adult mortality levels is uncertain. There remains very real uncertainty in my mind, an uncertainty I already felt when *Demography and Roman Society* appeared, that the levels of infant mortality being predicted by the Coale-Demeny tables (as mentioned already, over 300 per 1000 in first year of life; over 450 per 1000 in first five years; over 50% by age of ten years) were realistic. The year after my demography book was published, the journal *Historical Methods* printed new model life tables for high mortality populations that were based on empirical evidence: namely, that of freed American slaves in the nineteenth century who migrated to Liberia (Preston et al. 1993). In that same year the demographer Bob Woods (1993) discussed the relationship between infant and adult mortality. While overall he found the fit between the model life tables and empirical evidence good (in the case, e.g., of England and Wales 1861–63), it was in the cases where

¹³ Regarding malaria, note especially the work of Robert Sallares (especially 2002), including (Sallares et al. 2004) comments on the effect, via the mother, on fetal and infant mortality; see also Scheidel 2003: 164, 167. On disease environments in demographic history, I have learned a great deal from Dobson 1997, including her ch. 6 on malaria (note pp. 340–2 on infant feeding and care).

¹⁴ See, e.g., Schofield and Wrigley 1979 and Wrigley and Schofield 1981: ch. 8, for variations in infant mortality rates in different English parishes and towns from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries; cf. Woods 1993: 198, fig. 3.

average life expectancy at birth was below thirty years that the fit was weakest (see especially p. 197). More recently, Woods (2006b) went further and developed two new sets of high mortality model life tables, dubbed South Europe and East Asia, based on a range of data sets. These models, developed subsequent to the Coale-Demeny tables, are of great use to the ancient historian in trying to recreate likely scenarios into which ancient populations may be expected to fit. Rather than jettisoning model life tables altogether, as some would advocate, allowances can be made for weaknesses in their utility and more nuanced approaches applied. To sum up some very detailed demographic arguments, there are good reasons to believe that, to generalize, Coale-Demeny tables overestimate infant and early childhood mortality levels and underestimate mortality levels in later years. I would suggest, for example, that more useful general figures—always allowing for considerable variation over time and space—for the ancient world are, with average life expectancy at birth of the order of twenty-five years, an IMR of 200 rather than 300 per 1000 and early childhood mortality levels of 350 rather than 450 per 1000. These are still, of course, extremely high levels.

BREASTFEEDING

This chapter closes by considering one of the reasons we should allow for somewhat lower levels of infant mortality in particular than have previously been suggested: the level and nature of breastfeeding. Indeed, it is one of the most significant factors in terms of both mortality and fertility in the ancient world, albeit one much neglected in modern scholarship to date (though see also a number of chapters in this volume, especially those by Pudsey and Leyerle, which raise the issue). Keith Bradley's research on wet nursing in the ancient world is excellent (see also McWilliam in this volume). Aside from this, however, there has been almost no discussion of the topic, yet it must have been not only a common feature of ancient societies, a common duty of many women, but also a vital social and demographic factor, literally a matter of life and death.

Breast or bottle? It is a debate that rages, at least in the Western world. For a Roman mother to breastfeed her children appears to have been noteworthy enough (at least to her husband, and it must be said from the outset that it is almost always through males that we learn about breastfeeding) to feature on her tombstone, as the case of one *mater nutrix* illustrates:

To Graxia Alexandria, outstanding in character and chastity, who even¹⁵ raised her sons (*filios*) with her own breasts. Her husband Pudens, imperial freedman, (set this up for his) deserving (wife who) lived 24 years 3 months 16 days.

(CIL 6.19128 = ILS 8451, Rome)

¹⁵ *Etiam*; it could be translated “also.” For other *matres nutrices* see, e.g., CIL 6.21347 and 23078 = 34143b.

Already this might imply that maternal breastfeeding was unusual. In fact, we have preserved in the writings of Aulus Gellius a quite lengthy diatribe in which Favorinus, the sophist who flourished in the time of Hadrian, implored the mother of a woman who has just given birth to make her daughter breastfeed her own child rather than pass the child over to a wet nurse. It is a lengthy and highly tendentious text, but I shall quote most of it here, since it is very relevant to the context not just of this part of my chapter but also of this entire volume; it also provides an insight into the highly rhetorical and moralistic tone of much male discussion of the perceived roles of women:

A discourse of the philosopher Favorinus, in which he urged a lady of rank to feed with her own milk, and not with that of other nurses, the children whom she had borne. [1] Word was once brought in my presence to the philosopher Favorinus that the wife of an auditor and disciple of his had been brought to bed a short time before, and that his pupil's family had been increased by the birth of a son. [2] "Let us go," said he, "both to see the child¹⁶ and to congratulate the father." [3] The father was of senatorial rank and of a family of high nobility... [4] Then the philosopher, having embraced and congratulated the father immediately upon entering, sat down. And when he had asked how long the labour had been and how difficult, and had learned that the young woman, overcome with fatigue and wakefulness, was sleeping, he began to talk at greater length and said: "I have no doubt she will suckle her son herself (*filium lacte suo nutritura sit*)!" [5] But when the young woman's mother said to him that she must spare her daughter and provide nurses (*nutrices*) for the child, in order that to the pains which she had suffered in childbirth there might not be added the wearisome and difficult task of nursing, he said: "I beg you, madam, let her be wholly and entirely the mother of her own child. [6] For what kind of unnatural, imperfect and half-motherhood is it to bear a child and at once send it away from her? To have nourished in her womb with her own blood something which she could not see, and not to feed with her own milk what she sees, now alive, now human, now calling for a mother's care? [7] Or do you too perhaps think," said he, "that nature gave women nipples as a kind of beauty-spot, not for the purpose of nourishing their children, but as an adornment of their breast? [8] For it is for that reason (though such a thing is of course far from your thoughts) that many of those unnatural women try to dry up and check that sacred fount of the body, the nourisher of mankind, regardless of the danger of diverting and spoiling the milk, because they think it disfigures the charms of their beauty. In so doing they show the same madness as those who strive by evil devices to cause abortion of the foetus itself which they have conceived, in order that their beauty may not be spoiled by the labour of parturition. [9] But since it is an act worthy of public detestation and general abhorrence to destroy a human being in its inception, while it is being fashioned and given life and is still in the hands of Dame Nature, how far does it differ from this to deprive a child, already perfect, of the nourishment of its own familiar and kindred blood? [10] 'But it makes no difference,' for so they say, 'provided it be nourished and live, by whose milk that is effected.' ... [17] What,

¹⁶ Thus, *puerum* in the text, but perhaps one should read *puerperam*, the woman who has just given birth. Then again, one wonders if Favorinus was really all that interested in the mother in her own right.

then, is the reason for corrupting the nobility of body and mind of a newly born human being, formed from gifted seeds, by the alien and degenerate nourishment of another's milk? Especially if she whom you employ to furnish the milk is either a slave or of servile origin and, as usually happens, of a foreign and barbarous nation, if she is dishonest, ugly, unchaste and a wine-bibber; for as a rule anyone who has milk at the time is employed and no distinction made. [18] Shall we then allow this child of ours to be infected with some dangerous contagion and to draw a spirit into its mind and body from a body and mind of the worst character? ... [20] And there is no doubt that in forming character the disposition of the nurse and the quality of the milk play a great part; for the milk, although imbued from the beginning with the material of the father's seed, forms the infant offspring from the body and mind of the mother as well. [21] And in addition to all this, who can neglect or despise this consideration also, that those who desert their offspring, drive them from them, and give them to others to nurse, do sever, or at any rate loosen and relax, that bond and cementing of the mind and of affection with which nature attaches parents to their children? [22] For when the child is given to another and removed from its mother's sight, the strength of maternal ardour is gradually and little by little extinguished, every call of impatient anxiety is silenced, and a child which has been given over to another to nurse is almost as completely forgotten as if it had been lost by death. [23] Moreover, the child's own feelings of affection, fondness, and intimacy are centred wholly in the one by whom it is nursed, and therefore, just as happens in the case of those who are exposed at birth, it has no feeling for the mother who bore it and no regret for her loss. Therefore, when the foundations of natural affection have been destroyed and removed, however much children thus reared may seem to love their father and mother, that affection is in a great measure not natural but merely courteous and conventional." [24] I heard Favorinus make this address in the Greek language. I have reproduced his sentiments, so far as I was able, for the sake of their general utility, but the elegance, copiousness and richness of his words hardly any power of Latin eloquence could equal, least of all my humble attainments.

(Favorinus *ap.* Aulus Gellius 12.1, adapted from the translation of J. C. Rolfe; cf. also Macrobius, *Saturn.* 5.11.15–19)

Such a lengthy diatribe would hardly be warranted, or quotable by Aulus Gellius, if it was not of some import to the society. The implication must be that, among the Roman elite of this period at any rate, mothers were not routinely breastfeeding their children. This is highly significant in demographic terms apart from anything else, since, as I have already said, the level of breastfeeding in a society is a major determinant in making a difference in terms of fertility as well as of mortality in certain cases.

Breast milk provides an easily digested and ideal diet for an infant, as Galen recognized:

Nature herself planned for children, providing them mother's milk as a moist sustenance. And mother's milk is equally best for all children, provided it be not by chance diseased, and not least for the child of the best constitution, whom we are now discussing, for it is likely that the mother's whole body and her milk are free from disease. Hitherto, while in the uterus, we are wont to be nourished by blood, and the source of milk is from blood undergoing a slight change in the breasts. Hence

those children who are nourished by their mother's milk enjoy the most appropriate and natural food.

(*de San. Tuenda* 1.7)

In preindustrial societies, to feed an infant unpasteurized animal milk was tantamount to manslaughter. Breast milk provides powerful immunological protection from diseases as well as vital nutritional and antibacterial benefits—and, of course, it remains uninfected in the most unsanitary conditions, thus substantially lowering the IMR among populations where levels of hygiene and sanitation are relatively poor. Ancient feeding bottles that have survived as grave goods suggest that not all infants were breastfed. While there is considerable debate about whether these bottles were actually used, and if so what they might have contained (milk, water, wine?), their very existence is itself significant, even if they were mainly being used during weaning (cf. Fildes 1986; note also Bartsocas 1978 and Gourevitch 1990). Male moralistic, conservative writing from antiquity emphasizes that children should be breastfed by their mothers: Tacitus provides perhaps the most strident diatribe (akin to that by Favorinus/Gellius), stressing in typical fashion the contrast between the idealized past (when women fulfilled their roles as mothers) and the corrupt present (when children are handed over to slave wet nurses).¹⁷

Moralizing notwithstanding, ancient medicine had much to say on the topic of infant feeding and is rather more useful for our purposes. In his gynecological writing, Soranus explains that one should not feed a newborn infant for as long as two days after birth; after this he advises giving the infant some lightly boiled honey on the tip of one's finger (similar advice is given by other medical writers such as Galen, Oribasius, Aetius, and Paul of Aegina). Subsequently, says Soranus, a wet nurse should be employed for the first few days (or possibly weeks),¹⁸ in the long-standing belief that in that initial period after birth the mother's milk is bad. In fact, though, the colostrum the new mother produces is essential for the newborn, and the advice of Soranus and his fellow medical writers, if followed, would have served only to increase already high infant mortality levels. It is also very striking, and unusual for the time, that Soranus, at least in part, does not

¹⁷ *Dialogue on Oratory* 28.2–29.2; note the reference to the mother of the Gracchi, whom we have had cause to mention already. Cf. *Germania* 20.1 and Musonius Rufus 3. We know that Plutarch also wrote a (lost) work on wet nursing. This moral dimension has a very long history (see especially Newcome 1695); Rousseau in *The Social Contract* (1762) remarks: "When mothers deign to nurse their own children, then morals will reform themselves." It has been estimated that at that time in Paris' foundling hospital, where children—including Rousseau's five illegitimate children—had (too few) wet nurses, the IMR was around 850 per 1000.

¹⁸ Soranus *Gynaecia* 2.7.17–18: the text here is uncertain: the manuscript reads "twenty" but is often amended, on quite good grounds, to "three" (see Burguière et al. 1990: 26). Incidentally, this long-standing belief regarding colostrum was not universally held in antiquity: Aristotle (*de Gen. Anim.* 776a) assumed the mother will begin feeding immediately after birth, and neither Aristotle nor Galen mention colostrum; Soranus actually criticizes the physician Damastes for recommending that the mother start feeding her infant immediately after birth (cf. Parker 1999: 517–18).

assume mother's milk is always the best: "If the circumstances allow a choice of women able to suckle, one must select the best, and not necessarily the mother, unless she also shows the attributes characteristic of the best nurses" (*Gynaecia* 2.7.18). In some circumstances, of course, mothers were unable to provide milk for their infants, as concocations to promote breast milk preserved in Pliny the Elder testify: at *Nat. Hist.* 30.125, in a section introduced as *de muliebribus malis* (womanly complaints), Pliny mentions that earthworms (*vermes terreni*) in honey wine stimulate the flow of breast milk; at 30.131 he notes that eating partridge or quail eggs helps boost the supply of milk; and at 32.132 (on milk) he states that "crabs, boiled in their own liquor with sorrel and celery, hasten on the monthly flow and produce a plentiful supply of milk."

We have already seen the assumption, at least according to males of the early Roman Principate, that elite women were choosing to pass their infants over to wet nurses. On the other hand, and from a different context, one parent-in-law on a third-century CE papyrus admonishes the husband for *forcing* his wife to suckle their baby; the parent-in-law protests that a wet nurse should be hired, since no daughter of his or hers should have to breastfeed (Wilcken *Chr.* 483 = *P. Lond.* 3.951v). The case of the third-century martyr Perpetua is also of interest: in the *Passio Perpetuae* it is stated that she is well-born (*honeste nata*, i.e., of curial status; see Ameling 2012: 83–4), and she is clearly breastfeeding her own infant before she goes into prison (2.1–2; for doubts regarding Perpetua's high status, however, see Cooper 2011). We have also already seen references to how noteworthy it was that a mother fed her own child; similarly, pseudo-Quintilian (*Decl. mai.* 18.3) stresses that a woman was a good mother by noting that she fed her children at her own breasts and did not dump them on nurses. Certainly, wet nurses feature prominently in relevant literature and medical texts. The link between childhood and wet nursing is common in some authors (e.g., Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 3.1.2): to quote Marcus Aurelius again (*Med.* 5.4), he assumes (without moralizing judgment) that an infant will have both a mother and a nurse. *Mater et nutrix* (i.e., two separate people, as opposed to one *mater nutrix*) are also common on children's epitaphs.

So wet nurses appear to have been common, at least among the elite (see in particular Bradley 1986, 1991: 13–36, 1994; Dixon 1988: esp. 120–9, ch. 6; Laes 2011: 69–77; more generally, see Fildes 1988). Soranus spends a considerable amount of time and effort describing how to secure the best such nurse, for she must be very carefully chosen in terms of not only the quality of her milk but also her character and speech: she must be self-controlled, not a drunk or promiscuous, aged between twenty and forty years, of good complexion, with a large, strong, fleshy body, and ideally Greek and a mother for two to three months previously (*Gyn.* 2.20). She must watch her own diet (avoiding, for example, spicy and salty food), take moderate exercise, and abstain from sexual intercourse; similar requirements, especially the last, are also evidenced in wet-nursing contracts from Roman Egypt (Masciadri and Montevecchi 1984; Tawfik 1997; cf. Parca and Pudsey in this volume).

Of significant demographic interest is the question of the duration of breastfeeding, whoever carries it out. We know very little about this for antiquity regarding mothers, but again Roman Egypt provides evidence in terms of the lengths of service stipulated

on wet-nursing contracts and receipts: from a sample of some forty such documents (Masciadri and Montevicchi 1984; cf. Tawfik 1997: 940), periods of employment range from six months to three years, with the average being around two years (though one cannot be certain the wet nurse has been employed from immediately after birth). Medical testimony suggests a similar period before weaning takes place. Galen prescribes breast milk till the first tooth emerges, around seven months, and full weaning by the end of the second year (*de San. Tuenda* 9.29, 10.31). Soranus (*Gyn.* 2.46–8) notes that some women try to feed their babies cereal foods after only forty days; he advises that one should wait till the infant is more “solid,” at around six months, and that full weaning should occur only after eighteen months to two years. Others, Soranus says here revealingly, are wrong to prescribe full weaning after six months in the case of girls.

One can envisage early full weaning being a feature of poorer urban families where the woman needs to go out to work (compare England’s northern mills again). Feeding bottles aside, Galen and Soranus mention as suitable solids breadcrumbs soaked in milk—or, says Soranus, wine (see Garnsey 1998: 266–9; Scott 1999: 59–60; Laes 2011: 80–1); mention is also made of vegetables, eggs, and even meat. In this case skeletal evidence can provide us with further information. Carbon, nitrogen, and sulfur isotope analysis of bone marrow gives clues as to diet from various sites (including Britain, Egypt, and Italy):¹⁹ to sum up, in such samples it appears to have been normal for solids to be introduced at around the age of six months and for full weaning to take place from ages two to four years, though generally it occurred by age three. It is also very striking and revealing that in these samples marked infant mortality levels were detected in the two- to three-year age group. The time of weaning was another very dangerous time for the small child, perhaps the most dangerous since the first week of life. This is still true in developing countries—there are marked mortality peaks in such populations at around three to four months when supplementary foods are first introduced: the change in diet leads to reduced immunity, nutritional stress, and exposure to pathogens, especially if the new foods represent poor nutritional value or they are poorly or unhygienically prepared (weanling diarrhea is a common symptom at this stage of life). The second danger time is often at around nine months, when breast milk no longer provides enough nutrition, so that more and more solids are introduced: again, this is a time of high susceptibility to infection.²⁰

Thus far, we have considered the effect of breastfeeding on mortality levels. Breastfeeding also has a potential contraceptive effect. After giving birth a woman

¹⁹ Fuller et al. 2006; Katzenberg et al. 1996; Prowse et al. 2004; Lewis 2007: 115–9; Pearson et al. 2010; Nehlich et al. 2011. For further bibliography see the notes in the chapters by Pudsey and Stevens in this volume, and note too the excellent discussion of skeletal evidence in Redfern and Gowland 2012.

²⁰ Cf. FitzGerald et al. 2006 for the teeth of skeletons in the Isola Sacra necropolis at Ostia (second–third century CE): from a sample of 274 deciduous (“milk”) teeth it is calculated that there were mortality peaks at ages three–four months and seven–nine months.

typically experiences a brief postpartum infertile or nonsusceptible period before full menstruation and ovulation are restored. This usually lasts for two to three months, or even shorter if the fetus is aborted or the infant is stillborn. But if the mother practices *frequent and prolonged* breastfeeding, then the period of amenorrhea may be extended by as much as two years. This can have enormous demographic significance, especially if a society's methods of artificial contraception are lacking or relatively ineffective (it is also a topic of much controversy in the modern, so-called underdeveloped world; see Bracher 1992).

In an ancient context, if we hypothesize from what we have already said that prolonged breastfeeding may have occurred, at least in some cases, up to the age of two or three years, then this could delay conception and increase birth spacing by over one year. In demographic terms this is significant. It even appears that there was some awareness, albeit limited, of this contraceptive effect of lactation in some ancient sources.²¹ But if the material we have already examined is indicative of an avoidance of maternal breastfeeding among the upper classes, then upper-class fertility levels would have been heightened by the avoidance (whether full or partial) of maternal breastfeeding. At the same time, levels of infant mortality, particularly of males, may also have been elevated, if recent research relating to maternal breastfeeding is correct.²² Any contraceptive effect provided by lactation would have been limited to (apart from the wet nurses themselves) the lower classes, which can be assumed not routinely to employ wet nurses simply for economic reasons. (By contrast, the wealthiest Romans might have their own wet-nursing slaves.) Wet nurses may not have been very expensive, but they were also not cheap. The need for one may have been urgent if the mother lacked milk or died in childbirth and the infant survived, but otherwise members of the lower classes may have regarded a wet nurse as an unnecessary luxury. Not surprisingly, there is little evidence for this except for incidental glances: in Apuleius *Met.* 3.8, a (not wealthy) provincial woman with an infant at her breast begs for vengeance for herself and her child on the basis of her murdered husband, the infant's father; Juvenal (*Satire* 6.592–3) assumes that lower-class women, unlike their upper-class counterparts, fed their own children, but this is to suit his argument, and I wonder whether he or his readers really knew or cared.

To sum up, if maternal breastfeeding, frequent and prolonged, was the norm among poorer people in the Roman empire, then their fertility may have been significantly lower than that of their social "superiors," and, if abortion and exposure did not restore the balance, then the poor may have had smaller families, especially if they were also marrying at a later age on average than the upper classes. Of course, malnourishment is another possibly relevant factor in this context, since it might in turn lower a poorer woman's fertility as well as her ability to breastfeed.

²¹ See Parkin 1992: 130–1 for brief discussion of Aristotle, *de Gen. An.* 4.8.777a, *HA* 7.11.587b; Soranus, *Gyn.* 1.4.15, 2.7.18; [Plutarch], *de Lib. Educ.*, *Mor.* 3c–e.

²² See, e.g., Maher 1992; Goldberg et al. 2009; Riordan and Wambach 2010.

Differences in terms of social status are interesting and of much relevance to our discussion here, but in terms of mortality I think they should not be overstated. Somewhat more significant, generally speaking, would be the difference between urban and rural. In the city, death struck fairly indiscriminately. A study of London in the seventeenth century, which considered middle-class Londoners who changed their infant-feeding practices, noted that “it was difficult for infants of any social status or residential location within the metropolis to escape high rates of mortality” (Newton 2010: 278; see also the fundamental study of McLaren 1985, which remains very useful); I think the same underlying principle applied in the ancient world. Certainly a wet nurse’s milk was far healthier for an infant than would have been artificial feeding, especially if the wet nurse was in good health and, as appears to have been common in the ancient context, resided in the nursling’s home (Bradley 1986: 219, 224 n. 52; 1994: 152). The previously quoted diatribe of Favorinus/Aulus Gellius does not suggest otherwise, and references in the *Digest* to infants being sent away for feeding (32.99.3 (Paul), 50.16.210 (Marcian)) relate to the offspring of urban slaves, another matter entirely (pace Boswell 1988: 97). Only Seneca the Elder, at *Controv.* 4.6, points to a (fictional) father sending his newborn infants to the countryside; I would suggest that even if some degree of reality underlies this case, it highlights the relative rarity of such a practice. In any case, if the Roman upper classes not only were not routinely employing maternal breastfeeding but also were following Soranus’ advice regarding the avoidance of mother’s milk in the first weeks after birth, this would have heightened not only their own fertility but also infant mortality levels, thereby, perhaps, negating the effects of wealth, better living conditions, and medical support. Balancing this again, however, would be poorer and malnourished mothers producing undersized babies and hence, I would suggest, similar mortality levels for rich and poor, but the former have higher fertility. While Augustus seems to have been most concerned about elite fertility, male insistence on maternal breastfeeding would have had, ironically, the opposite effect.

CONCLUSION

Infancy and early childhood were not times of safety but a period to be survived, gods willing. Greeks and Romans were well aware that death could and did take its toll. Children may have been a much more significant proportion of the living population then than today, but they were also the ones who died most often (so to speak). Some periods of one’s early life were much more vulnerable than others, as modern pediatric science recognizes—and indeed as was recognized in antiquity: Aristophanes of Byzantium in the third–second centuries BCE gives detailed Greek terminology for the stages of infancy, from birth onward (Slater 1986: 28–71; Parker 1999; see also Liston and Rotroff in this volume). In fact, in many ways, in demographic terms at least, it is also wrong to consider the life cycle of the person from the moment of birth (wider issues, relating to the question of when sense and life begin, are controversial in this

context): the demography of the viable fetus is also highly relevant in terms of mortality and in defining infancy. Demographers consider perinatal mortality death in the last trimester of pregnancy and the first week of life; thus, childbirth becomes an event *within* this stage of life (see especially Woods 2009; cf. Golden 2004: 157). We have already seen a similar observation made by Aristotle and Plutarch regarding the first week after childbirth. As we have seen in this chapter, as different as our worlds may be, not least in demographic terms, our conceptions of children show much continuity.

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CHAPTER 3

BABIES IN THE WELL: ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR NEWBORN DISPOSAL IN HELLENISTIC GREECE

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INTRODUCTION

HIGH infant mortality is an acknowledged fact of life in antiquity and remained common in many parts of the world into the modern period. Ancient perinatal mortality rates are generally assumed to be as high or higher than historic infant death rates (Faerman and Smith 2008: 211–2; see also Parkin in this volume). In Greece as in other parts of the world, perinatal infant burials are relatively rare in ancient cemeteries, and this differential burial treatment confounds attempts to examine children's lives as well as their place in society after death (Golden 1988: 154, 2004: 153–4; Scott 1999: 90; Ingvarsson-Sundström 2003: 21). While some of this is attributable to recovery bias, nevertheless there are fewer infant graves than would be expected for many time periods.

Greek sources have little to say about the way newborn dead were regarded. Death in early infancy was ascribed to various bogeywomen, childless creatures who preyed on the newborn (Johnston 1995), but what happened to the infants after death, and whether or not they were likely to return to harass the living, is uncertain.¹ The arrival of a newborn infant would have attracted little attention outside of the immediate

*The order of the authors is alphabetical.

¹ For some hints to ancient beliefs on these topics, see Plato *Republic* 10.615c; Plutarch *de genio Socratis* 590f; Vergil *Aeneid* 6.426–9. Roman texts suggest that the infant dead were sometimes regarded as threatening (Baills 2003: 83–4), but cf. Dasen in this volume.

household (Plato *Alcibiades* 1, 121c–d), and upon the infant's death very little attention or ceremony would have attended the burial (Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 164; Garland 1985: 78–80; Lagia 2007: 299–300). The Attic orators, who manage to cover just about every conceivable topic, never mention the high death rate among infants (Sallares 1991: 135, 193). Although images of newborns do occur (Grossman 2007: 310), in the few scenes from classical art that depict an infant as the deceased, the baby clearly is well past the neonatal stage and is able to sit up or attempt to walk (Rühfel 1984: 114; Oakley 2003: 170–3, 191; Oakley 2004: 44, 48, 119, 221). Depictions of infants are also rare in Hellenistic funerary art, and none appears to represent a neonate (Oakley 2003: 189).

The lack of substantial evidence for infants in graves has sometimes been misinterpreted as evidence that children had little impact on society or were not cared for by their parents (Golden 1990: 82–5, 2011: 267–8). Others have argued, however, that children's death and burial were quite significant and that the burials were treated with special care (Houby-Nielsen 2000: 151–2). While it is clear that some infants and older children received formal burial and other mortuary ritual, the number of infant burials is nowhere near the expected frequency of the very young.

The study of infants and children in antiquity has benefited from the new attention given to the lives and deaths of the very young, but the problem of the missing infant remains (Moore and Scott 1997; Scott 1999: 1; Cohen 2007: 1–2; Lewis 2007: 10–11; Dasen 2011: 291). Morris (1987: 62) perhaps overstates the problem in describing the missing infant burials as “archeologically invisible,” but the recovery and analysis of infants not given formal burial are certainly archeologically challenging.

For these reasons, an extraordinary deposit of 449 infant and fetal skeletons from a well in the Athenian Agora and smaller samples from other informal burial contexts in the Agora are particularly important. They provide an opportunity to account for some of the infants denied formal burial and to examine the causes and context of infant mortality in the Hellenistic period. The assemblage is a nearly unique window into the cultural practices associated with this missing segment of Greek society and into how ancient Athenians handled the loss of their youngest, most vulnerable members.

During the 1937 and 1938 American excavations in the Athenian Agora, a well was excavated some 40 meters north of the temple of Hephaestus, just outside the western boundary of the Agora. The well and its associated water system were constructed, probably in the classical period, to serve an area of artisans' workshops. These shops were abandoned in the first quarter of the second century, creating an area of tumble-down buildings, isolated from the nearby public spaces by the blank back walls of the Stoa of Zeus to the east and the arsenal to the south (Figure 3.1). The location is both conveniently close to the public center of Athens and isolated in a blind alley that could be approached only from the west, hidden from the commercial and public activities of the Agora.

The well contained an array of household and industrial debris and an extraordinary deposit of human and dog bones. The human bone included an adult and an older

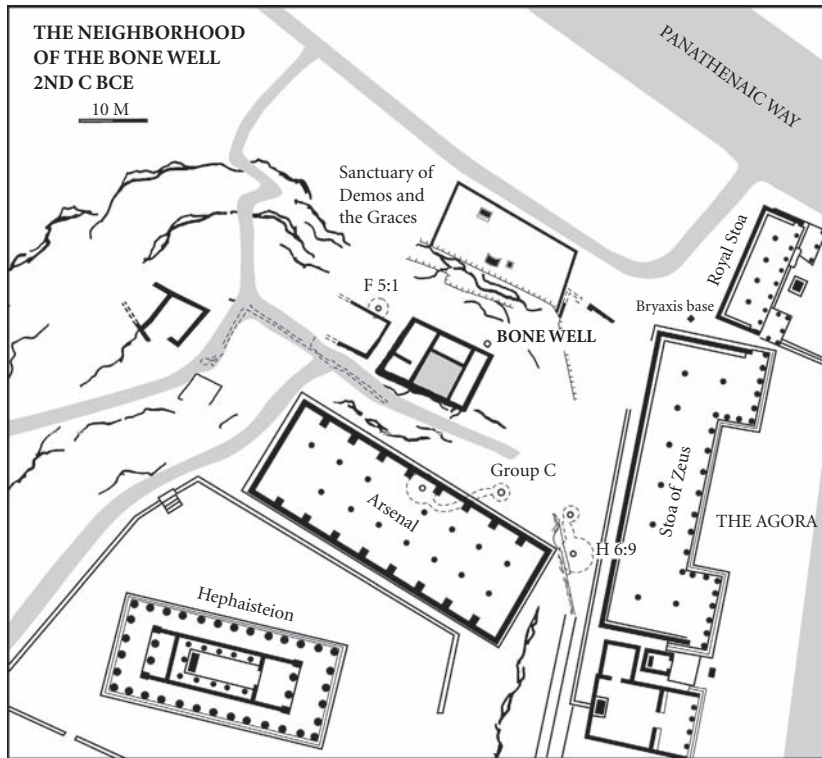


FIGURE 3.1 The neighborhood of the Bone Well. (Drawing by S. Rotroff.)

child, but the bulk consisted of the remains of a minimum of 449 infants and fetuses. Although excavated more than seventy years ago, the well and its contents were never thoroughly published, and a multidisciplinary project has recently undertaken this task.²

The well is approximately 1 meter in diameter, partially lined with terracotta tiles, and is connected to a cistern and a partially collapsed water system. There was a small amount of Byzantine material in the mouth, below which a nearly sterile fill of earth and rocks extended to a depth of 13 meters. Excavators reached the water table at 11 meters, and at a depth of between 13 and 14.10 meters noted worked animal bone and possible human bones. The latter may have included one or both of the older skeletons, since the

² The study of the Agora baby well was initiated by Susan I. Rotroff, Washington University in St. Louis, who examined all of the cultural materials from the well; Lynn M. Snyder, Smithsonian Institution, who was responsible for the animal bones; and Lisa M. Little, who began the study of the human remains but was unable to complete the work due to other commitments. The initial results were presented at a colloquium session at the 1999 annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America (Little 1999; Rotroff 1999; Snyder 1999). Beginning in 2003, the analysis of the human remains was continued by Maria A. Liston, University of Waterloo, Ontario. The results of this phase of the project have also been presented at various conferences (Liston 2006, 2008, 2009a, 2009b).

bones were immediately identified as human in the excavator's notebook.³ At 14.70 m, the fill was described as containing masses of bones and coarse pottery, a deposit that continued to a depth of 20.50 meters. It is this material that includes the bulk of the infant bones. Fill below that depth was the sterile soil common at the bottom of a well. Excavation continued to 21.45 meters and then ceased, without reaching the bottom of the cutting. The exact depth of various objects was not recorded during excavation, and subsequently the animal and human bones were stored as a single mass, without stratigraphic distinction.

There were over 8 kilograms of bronze scrap in the well, concentrated between 16.00 and 18.45 meters and probably originating in the nearby metal workshops. The bronze stained many of the bones bright green. This is most prominent on the adult and older child's bones but is also seen on much of the infant and animal bone. When exposed to water, copper forms a number of different compounds that bind to suspended sediments and particulate matter or are soluble in water (*Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry* 2004: 3–4). Although according to the notebooks the bronze scraps were not widely distributed in the well, these copper compounds would potentially circulate throughout the column of water as additional water entered the well to replace loss through evaporation and when the water was disturbed through the deposit of additional bodies and other objects. Together with the location of the deposits in a stable environment below the water table, the copper, a strong antimicrobial agent, probably contributed to the extraordinarily good preservation of these bones.

Relatively little pottery was found in the upper fill of the well. While the excavation notebooks are not entirely clear, it appears that most of the whole and nearly whole large objects were found in association with the bones. The latest independently datable object from the fill containing the mass of bones is a Cnidian amphora handle naming the eponym Euphragoras I and dating to circa 150 BCE. It was found at 13 meters, near the top of the bone deposit or slightly above it. The absence of the distinctive long-petal moldmade bowls typical of the second half of the second century indicates the well cannot have remained open long after 150 BCE. The figured moldmade bowls in the deposit further indicate a range of about fifteen years, from circa 165 to 150 BCE, and it is likely that the mass of baby bones is the result of an accumulation over some years, not a catastrophic event leading to the deaths of large numbers of infants.

For the most part, the pottery in the well is similar to that found in ordinary household debris of the period, and much of it is probably refuse from the workshop, the dinner table, or the kitchen.⁴ Some of the vessels, however, can be associated with the deposition of the infant bodies. A spouted feeding bottle (Figure 3.2), a shape best known from

³ In the early years of the Agora excavations it was rare for human remains in wells to be recognized during excavation unless a reasonably intact cranium was found. Only the adult and older child have recognizable crania in this well; the infant crania are too young for the bones to have fused together and therefore would have been found as individual bony plates, resembling thin potsherds more than human skulls.

⁴ A selection of the pottery will be published in Rotroff (forthcoming).



FIGURE 3.2 Feeding bottle from the well (Agora inventory P 13498). (Photo by Agora Excavations.)



FIGURE 3.3 Basins from the well (Agora inventory P 13797, P 13703). (Photo by Agora Excavations.)

the graves of children, has the most obvious associations with infancy. Eight *unguentaria* (oil bottles), intact or nearly so, including two pairs of nearly identical forms, represent the most common grave offering of the Hellenistic period and may have entered the well as grave gifts. One largely complete canteen and fragments of another could have been used during childbirth as hot-water bottles, a practice attested by Soranus (*Gyn.* 2.3.4). Their association with untimely death and the resulting pollution may have led to their disposal with the infant bones.

The most striking aspect of the pottery assemblage is the quantity of vessels that are normally found at low frequencies in well deposits but that make up 80% of the household pottery here. These are large, open household-ware shapes, including *lekainai* (basins), large bowls, kraters, and mortars (Figure 3.3). Many are whole and are unlikely to have gone into the well as normal refuse, and all are of a sufficient size to have been used to carry a tiny body and associated afterbirth to the well. In addition to these, two large cooking pots and some sizeable fine-ware vessels may have served a

similar purpose. While these shapes have clear domestic daily uses, they also may have been used during the birth process for catching the afterbirth or cleaning the child and mother after delivery. Soranus (2.2.2) lists water and sponges among the equipment necessary for the birth process, and these shapes would have been appropriate receptacles. If the child died, they may have been tainted by association with untimely death and deposited in the well along with the body. It is important to note that infants in archaic and classical Athens were frequently buried in pots, and many of the previously listed shapes are attested in this use in the cemeteries of Athens (*Kerameikos* XI: 26–29; Knigge 1966, grave 44; Schlörb-Vierneisel 1966, grave 217). The record of infant burials for the Hellenistic period is very thin, but it is likely that earlier customs continued.

The animal bones also represent an assemblage that differs from most groups of well debris.⁵ In addition to a quantity of typical butchering and food remains, including pigs, sheep, and goats, a number of worked bone tools that may have been associated with the artisans' workshops in the area were found, as were over 150 dogs, including both mature animals and many puppies (Snyder 1999: 284). Entire skeletons of dogs are represented in over 4700 canid bones from the well, and it appears that the animals went into the well intact. The size of the animals ranges widely, from small terrier or lapdog size to large, heavy, hunting or guard dogs. Most, however, are average-sized dogs, 35–40 cm high at the shoulder, and common in urban dog populations. The age of the dogs ranges from adult to newborn, and both males and females are present in the adults. Approximately 65–70% were adults, 16–18% were juveniles, and 15% were young puppies. The age distribution does not reflect natural die-off, and the large percentage of adult animals suggests they were deliberately chosen for deposit into the well. There is, however, no evidence that they were given special status before their deaths; many have evidence of nutritional deficiency, including bowed limb bones, and there are a large number of healed or partially healed fractures of the limb bones and ribs, all of which suggest that they led rather hard lives.

While there is no evidence that the dogs came from a special group, raised and prepared for sacrifice, the presence of the dogs does suggest some ritual activity associated with the deposit of the infants. The evidence does not suggest that the dogs are simply the remains of dead strays, deposited in the well as a convenience along with other urban waste. If the dogs were simply the usual assortment of urban strays, the age profile of the collection should be the same as that of natural die-off, with a heavy concentration of puppies and aged adults. The dogs appear to have been chosen for a particular reason, presumably associated with the large concentration of infant human bones.

Dogs are not infrequently associated with Athenian graves and seem in some cases to have played a part in the rituals accompanying burial, including that of newborn infants (*Kerameikos* V, I: 269–270, no. 94; *Kerameikos* XIV: 60–61, 125; Smithson 1974: 334, 362). Their association with infant and child burial all over the Greco-Roman

⁵ We are grateful to our colleague Lynn M. Snyder for her cooperation and assistance in the preparation of this chapter, and for access to her analyses of the animal bones from the Agora Baby Well.

world in many time periods is also well documented.⁶ The dogs in the well may also have had significance in relation to the pollution brought on by both childbirth and death (Theophrastus *Characters* 16.9; Nilsson 1941: 85–8). The combination of both birth and death would engender a particularly serious case of impurity, and those who placed the babies in the well therefore had a double need for purification. Sacrifices of dogs in ancient Greece were generally associated only with purification rites. Many ancient texts mention the special ability of the dog to absorb malign influences, and they are associated with purification in both healing cult and childbirth (Day 1984: 27; Theophrastus *Characters* 16.14–15; Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 277b–c). The dogs may have been deposited in the well after they absorbed the pollution resulting from childbirth and the death of the infants. Similar, although smaller, assemblages containing both dogs and infants have been identified from other wells in the Agora, including the Crossroads Well and a well near the Stoa Poikile, as well as in wells at Eretria (Chenal-Velarde 2006: 28–9) and Messene (Bourbou and Themelis 2010).

If the dogs were sacrifices, the limited number of divinities that could have received them includes several who were associated with childbirth and healing. What is particularly interesting in the context of the Agora Bone Well is the use of the dog for sacrifices to goddesses of childbirth including Eilioneia/Eileithuia, Genita Mana, Artemis, and Hecate (Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 277b–c; Hesychius s.v. *Genetullis*; Pliny *NH* 29.14.58). The goddess with whom dogs are most intimately associated, however, is Hecate or Hecate-Artemis (Reitler 1949: 30; Zaganiaris 1975; Chilardi 2002: 35–6; Dillon 2002: 246–7). Not only did Hecate have a long history as a goddess of birth, but she also was intimately connected with death; her special province seems to have been the point at which a soul either entered or left a body. She was also particularly associated with those who died before their time (Rhode 1925: 593–5)—a description that can aptly be applied to most of the individuals in the well. The dogs could have absorbed the pollution incurred by the recent birth and death, either by direct application to the polluted person or by sacrifice. They may also have served as a protection against the possible malign influence of the untimely dead.

The human bone in the Agora Bone Well also includes skeletons of two older individuals, an adult male and a child, about eight years of age. Both exhibit significant skeletal pathology and possibly were buried in the well because of these pathologies. It has been previously documented that individuals with significant injury or illness that would make them dysfunctional or “outcasts” in society may receive differential burial outside of the societal norms (Little and Papadopoulos 1998; Papadopoulos 2000). Both of these skeletons may fall into this category, as each exhibits severe pathologies that probably impaired motion and other functions (Liston 2006).

⁶ A catalog of dog burials in the Greek world is provided in Day 1984: 22–6. Soren 1999: 628–30 summarized dog burials in the Roman world and noted the presence of dog skeletons among the infant burials at Poggio Gramigniano.

The human infant bones from the Agora well were initially examined by J. Lawrence Angel, who estimated that there were about 175 infants in the well (Angel 1945: 311–2). He found 155 left and right scapulae and suggested that additional individuals were represented in the material. Angel also observed that most of the skeletons were of full-term infants or late-term fetuses, with several older infants as well. Although he looked at the material, the presence of large numbers of many readily identifiable human bones in the animal bone bags suggests that no serious attempt to sort all of the bone was ever made prior to the present study.

A complete count of all identifiable infant and fetal bones represented in the collection today yields a minimum number of individuals (MNI) of 449. This is based on the right femur, the most frequently occurring bone in the collection, but the other long bones also are present in large quantities. The number of recovered bones in the collection decreases with size, so the femur and humerus are the most common bones in the collection, followed by decreasing quantities of tibiae, ulnae, radii, and fibulae. Smaller bones of the vertebrae, pelvic and pectoral girdles, and hands and feet are fairly rare. In addition to the long bones, cranial bones are well represented, with almost five thousand identifiable pieces. These make up approximately 50% of the baby bone assemblage by volume. In all, 12,808 individual bones were identified, not including fragments of cranial vault bone less than 1 centimeter in diameter.

The ages of the infants were estimated from measurements of long bone length (Fazekas and Kosa 1978: 256–64; Scheuer et al. 1980: 260), utilizing the most frequently occurring element in the collection, the right femur. The bones correspond in size to skeletons ranging in age from twenty-six weeks in utero to four to six months post-term for the two older infants, with a clear peak at thirty-seven to thirty-eight weeks, or about the age of a full-term birth. Because almost all of the infant bones fall within a very limited size range, only two partial skeletons of older infants can be identified from the mass of human bones. The remaining skeletons must be considered as a single commingled sample, not as individuals; for any given skeletal element, there are multiple bones of each incremental size, making identification by size alone impossible.

Despite the inability to distinguish among most of the individual skeletons in the well, it is important to consider who these children were, or at least how they came to die and be deposited in the well. The cause of death for the infants has been the topic of much speculation in the past seventy years. Angel (1945: 311) suggested that the deaths were the result of an undocumented plague or famine, perhaps associated with Sulla's siege of Athens in 86 BCE. It is clear now, however, that the deposit is much too early to be associated with Sulla. It also has been argued that the infants might have died naturally but were offered symbolically to Aphrodite Ourania (Shear 1939: 239; Osanna 1988–89). Pausanias (1.14.6) places her sanctuary in the northwest corner of the Agora, and it was originally identified with foundations slightly west of the well (Travlos 1949: 391–2, fig. 2; Travlos 1971: 79–80). Those foundations are now known to date to the early Roman period, and the altar now identified with the sanctuary is some 60 meters from the well and separated from it by a steep slope and two roads. The likelihood that it is related to the bone deposit is minuscule.

Large-scale infanticide must also be considered, analogous to that proposed for infant skeletons found in a cistern at Roman Ashkelon and at a villa in Roman Britain (Smith and Kahila 1992; Mays 1993; also see Evans Grubbs in this volume). These skeletons have been proposed as victims of infanticide, based almost exclusively on the age distributions, which cluster around the age of full-term infants. However, many ancient authors acknowledged that the first few days of life were when an infant was most likely to die in the past (see Parkin in this volume), so this is precisely the age when most infant burials are to be expected. The frequencies of ages at death in the Agora well age profile are nearly identical to the Ashkelon and Roman British infant ages at death and to the infant mortality profile among other premodern cultures. For example, the extensive data available on North American Plains Arikara demonstrate similar patterns of infant mortality during the centuries after contact with Europeans (Owsley and Jantz 1985: 324–5). In addition, there is clear evidence for other causes of death in these infants who died around the time of birth without hypothesizing large-scale infanticide. No paleopathological analysis has been published for the Ashkelon and Roman British infant burials, but the similarity of these and the Agora infants to mortality profiles of perinatal infants from North America suggests that infanticide is an unlikely explanation for the infant deaths.

The number of very small skeletal elements indicates that about 15% of the Agora babies died at a gestational age of twenty-four to thirty-four weeks. These premature and preterm infants would probably have died simply from complications that were either associated with or the precipitating causes of premature birth. Physicians in antiquity recognized the problems related to preterm birth. A fragment from the lost work of Damastes presents a calendar of gestation, with the stages of development of the fetus (Parker 1999: 515–7). Other authors including Censorinus (*De die natali* 9, 11) were concerned with the development of the fetus and its survivability. While in general it was understood that the older fetus had a better chance of surviving than one born too early, pre-Socratic number theory conflicted with biological fact, producing the curious assertion that a seven-month fetus was more likely to live than an eight-month one because seven was the more perfect number (Hanson 1987: 590; Parker 1999: 521–5). This error was repeated in the Hippocratic writings as well (*Epidemics* 2.3.17; *Carn.* 19; *On the Seven-Month Child* and *On the Eight-Month Child*).

Historic data collected prior to recent advances in neonatal care can provide an indication of the impact of prematurity in the past. Even in the first half of the twentieth century in New York, approximately 50% of the neonatal deaths were premature infants. Of these, approximately 55–60% died in the first twenty-four hours and a further 30% by the end of the first week, and regardless of gestational age more premature males died than females (Abramson 1941: 545, 548). Given the tradition in Hellenistic Greece of older men marrying much younger women (Demand 1994: 11–12; Pomeroy 1997: 4–5), it is interesting also to note that, while maternal age had little effect on the rate of premature births, older fathers were strongly associated with high incidence of

both stillbirth and premature birth rates in this twentieth-century study (Abramson 1941: 551).

The challenges to survival for the premature infant are many and were even greater in a world without effective medical support and intervention. The stress of prematurity compounds the various potential problems associated with the transition at birth, and premature delivery is often triggered by an underlying condition that further compromises the infant's chance of survival (Abramson 1941: 555). Premature infants encounter problems such as respiratory distress due to immature lung development that can contribute to high mortality rates. Up to 50% of infants born before thirty-six weeks' gestation and up to 80% of those born before twenty-eight weeks will develop respiratory distress. Just as they are at greater risk for premature birth, male infants are also at higher risk than females for respiratory distress syndrome (Pickerd and Kotecha 2008: 153–4). Another common problem in the preterm infant is thermal stress due to a lack of insulating body fat. A fetus begins to develop subcutaneous fat between twenty-six and twenty-nine gestational weeks, but it remains very thin until near the end of normal gestation, leaving the preterm infant subject to potentially fatal heat or cold stresses (Thomas 1994: 16–7).

At the other end of the age range, the two oldest infants in the skeletal collection offer evidence of specific causes of death. One infant, aged about six months at death, presents the only evidence for premortem trauma in the collection. Because this is the oldest infant and the bones are markedly larger and more mature than all other infants in the well, it was possible to isolate the associated cranial and postcranial skeleton from this individual.

There is a fracture on the posterior right side of the skull, with three fracture lines radiating from a central point (Figure 3.4). On the inner and outer tables of the bone there is a small area of reactive periosteal bone, formed as the bone began to resolve the fracture. This clearly indicates that the infant survived for at least four to fourteen days prior to death (Walker et al. 1997: 205; Lewis 2007: 179). Some of the fracture lines parallel the radiating spicules of bone that characterize the developing infant skull. Others, however, cross these lines, indicating that the fracture was the result of a focal impact with a sharp object and not the blunt force impact that results from a fall or dropping an infant (Holck 2005: 191). The evidence suggests a deliberate blow to the head and thus may represent one of the earliest documented cases of child abuse. In addition, the limb bones of this child exhibit asymmetrical deposits of periosteal bone. While numerous infectious conditions and dietary deficiencies can result in periosteal bone formation, the asymmetrical pattern and the distribution of the lesions demonstrate that they were caused by trauma. Similar patterns are found on the skeletons of abused children from forensic contexts and are indicative of the battered child syndrome (Walker et al. 1997: 203–4). When a child's arms or legs are grabbed roughly or the child is shaken while being gripped by the limbs, the bruising of the periosteal membrane results in new bone formation. While exact cause of death cannot be determined, pressure and bleeding from the cranial fracture and the associated hematoma may have contributed. The

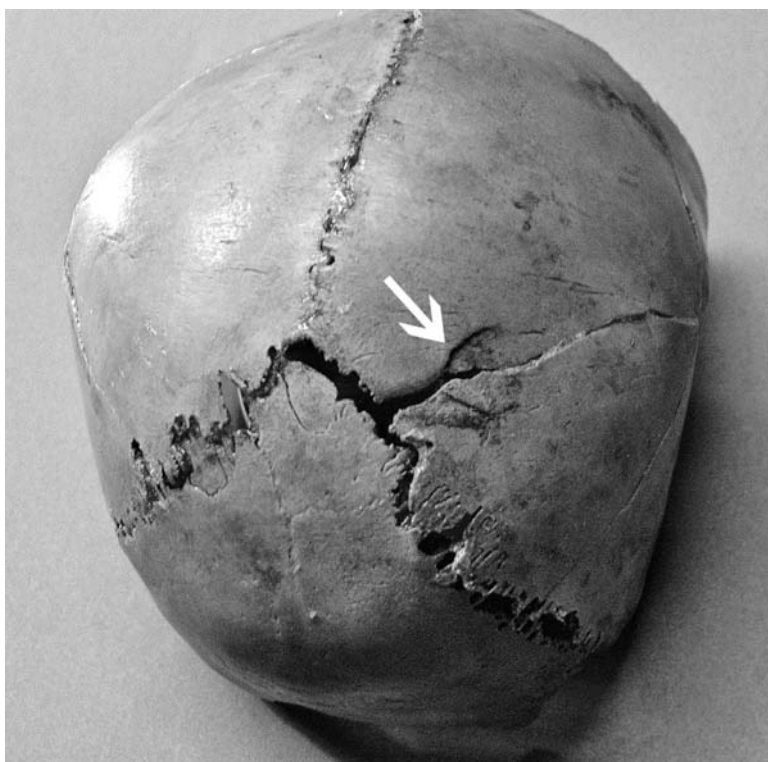


FIGURE 3.4 Cranial fracture in six-month-old infant from the well. (Photo by M. Liston.)

presence of periosteal bone deposit on the limb bones suggests a history of abuse in this infant's short life.

The second of the two postnatal infants died at about four to six months of age. The partial skull and skeleton were recovered from this child, who appears to have suffered from hydrocephalus (Rizvi and Anjum 2005: 503). Neonatal hydrocephalus is relatively common, occurring in one or two of every one thousand live births, and at least six archeological examples have been identified worldwide. Even with medical treatment, 48% of neonatal hydrocephalus cases die within the first year of life (Garne et al. 2010: 153; Richards and Anton 1991: 187).

The skull of the Agora infant is large for the estimated age of the child, and the cranial vault exhibits significant pathological features. Despite the size and age of the infant, the fontanelles (soft spots) remain completely open, and larger than expected for even a neonatal skull. In addition to the open fontanelles there is evidence of increased vascularity on the ectocranial surface. The other sutures show signs of abnormal growth as well. Extending back about one centimeter from the suture edge the bone is rough, vascularized, and the gross structure appears to be distorted, again suggesting abnormally rapid growth, to accommodate increasing cerebrospinal fluid accumulation.

In addition to an enlarged cranium, one of the commonly observable features of hydrocephalus is “setting sun” eyes, in which the eyes are displaced downwards by expansion of the frontal region of the brain. The superior orbital shelf of the preserved right orbit of the Agora infant is angled down at about 135° , as opposed to the normal circa 90° angle, which confirms the presence of hydrocephaly in this infant.

Neonatal and infant hydrocephalus may be congenital, caused by a malformation and blockage in the normal ventricular drainage of cerebrospinal fluid, or acquired, secondary to infectious illness (Cook 1971: 796; Warf 2010: 296). Congenital hydrocephalus may be associated with myelomeningocele (spina bifida) (Cook 1971: 796; Rizvi and Anjum 2005: 503). The fact that this infant probably survived for some time after birth suggests that there was no associated severe spina bifida, as infection from an open spinal canal would have caused the infant’s death very quickly (Cook 1971: 797-8). Another frequently associated anomaly is an encephalocele, where neural tissues protrude through an opening in the skull. The sagittal suture near the occipital is a common location for this, and a curved diversion of the posterior sagittal suture on the right parietal of this individual suggests such an opening may have existed, but the associated left parietal bone is incomplete, and the extent of the opening is not clear.

Reactive bone deposits on the endocranial surfaces of non-adults have received considerable attention in recent years. The lesions are most frequently found on the occipital, parietal and frontal bones, but all areas of the interior cranial vault may be affected (Lewis 2007: 141-2). A variety of conditions that cause inflammation or hemorrhage may cause pathological new bone growth inside the skull, but among neonates, birth trauma and non-specific meningitis are most likely to be the cause. Chronic meningitis in infants and children can last for some weeks, and may result in hydrocephalus, coma, and death (Lewis 2004: 85; Schultz 2001: 128-9).

There is extensive evidence of neonatal meningitis in the infant skeletons from the well, suggesting that this was a significant threat and contributor to mortality of infants in Hellenistic Athens. Cranial bone was the most consistently recovered portion of the skeleton from the infants; there were a total of 4,494 identifiable cranial vault fragments more than one centimeter in diameter. Each of these was examined for evidence of pathological new bone formation. The frequency of pathological lesions on the cranial vault bones varied considerably: 36% of the occipital squamae exhibited clearly pathological lesions, while 17.6% of the left and right frontal halves and 7% of the parietal fragments likewise showed reactive new bone. In addition to the bones of the cranial vault, a small number of sphenoid bones exhibited periosteal bone deposition, consistently on the greater wing. These numbers are consistent with data from many sites in central Europe and the eastern Mediterranean which show a distinct trend of increasing frequency through time, from a low of 10-20% in the Bronze Age to a high of 40-45% of infant skeletons affected in medieval central Europe (Schultz 2001: 129-31).

Nearly 40% of the infants in the Agora well can be demonstrated to have died from natural causes, either complications of preterm birth or endocranial infection, probably meningitis. Many more also undoubtedly died of commonly fatal conditions that leave no evidence on the skeletal remains. In particular, respiratory infections and diarrhea

contribute to high infant mortality rates, and living conditions in ancient Athens would have made these common (Barros et al. 1987: 488). The skeletal evidence suggests that many of the infants died of natural causes. Together with the potential deaths from causes that leave no skeletal traces, it is unlikely that most of these infants were victims of infanticide.

This is not to say that infanticide or exposure did not occur, or that it was not associated with the death of any of the infants in the well. There are a number of cases that may be attributable to exposure or infanticide, in addition to the older infant described above that appears to a victim of repeated child abuse. We know that it was the midwife's duty to inspect a infant immediately after birth, evaluating its strength and general health, and checking for any abnormalities (Soranus, *Gyn.* 2.6). The infants that exhibited visible developmental defects would potentially have been rejected by the family, and exposed or killed, either deliberately or by neglect. There is evidence of such birth defects among the infants in the Agora well.

The most common visible birth defect in European populations is cleft palate, or cleft lip and palate, occurring at a rate of one or two per 1000 births (Vanderas 1987: 217; Ward and Sadove 1989: 396). At birth, the palatine process of the maxilla normally extends to the midline, forming a continuous hard shelf of bone. This bone is essential to the process of nursing, facilitating the suction necessary for normal feeding. In addition, a cleft palate connects the oral and nasal cavities, frequently resulting in infections and increased aspiration of liquids. Infants with cleft lip and/or palate will experience feeding, breathing and later speech problems as well as disfigurement (Barnes 1994: 187). Among teratogenic causes, alcohol consumption during pregnancy is the most likely to have affected fetal development in antiquity, and seasonal variations of incidence in historic populations suggest that deficiencies in maternal nutrition may also play a role (Barnes 1994: 184-7). In a society known to have practiced exposure of infants, such a visible and debilitating birth defect, coupled with poor prognosis for survival, would almost certainly have resulted in rejection of the infant.

Out of the 164 preserved maxillae, there are a total of nine in which the palate is incompletely formed. All of the affected maxillae appear to be from full term infants. Six exhibit incomplete palate defects in which there is hypoplasia of the palate shelf, without definite involvement of the dental arch and upper lip (Figure 3.5). Of these seven were on the left side and two were found in right maxillae. None of the pathological maxillae could be paired with any others in the collection, so it is impossible to determine if the defect is unilateral or bilateral. Unilateral clefting occurs in as many as 80% of cleft palate defects, and because the development of the left side of the palate normally lags slightly behind the right, there is a predominance of left side unilateral clefts (Barnes 1994: 187). There were no bilateral clefts found, but none of the maxillae with clefts could be paired with the associated opposite bone, so it is entirely possible that all of the Agora infants had unilateral clefts.

At least one infant from the Agora well was born with a malformed limb. Two bones—a humerus and ulna, the upper and lower arm segments—are noticeably deformed. Both bones are quite short, about the length of those of a 26-week fetus, but are nearly as broad



FIGURE 3.5 Infant maxillae with cleft palate (on left) and normal palate (on right). (Photo by M. Liston.)

as those of a full term infant. The joint surfaces of the anomalous bones are generally flat, shallow and even more amorphous than the normal fetal or infant form. The distal humerus and the proximal ulna in particular lack the normal morphology exhibited in the hundreds of comparative specimens provided by this collection. The similarities in the shape distortion suggest that the two bones are from the same individual.

The variety of syndromes associated with limb reduction defects is enormous, but shortened bone shafts with joint anomalies are among the most common. Also common is dysplasia or aplasia of the radius, the second bone of the lower arm. No radius with similar dimensions could be identified in the collection, so it is possible that it was congenitally absent.

Although rare, limb reduction deformities are among the more common major birth defects, occurring in between 2.6 and 7.3 per 10,000 live births. Because limb defects are often associated with syndromes that are not compatible with life, the incidence in stillbirths is as high as 26.7 per 10,000. There are many causes including genetics, teratogens, and vascular disruptions, but the cause of nearly one-third are unknown (Kumar 2008: 300-1).

Another fairly common skeletal anomaly is a cervical rib, occurring in up to 1% of human populations. In this condition, an additional rib forms above the regular ribs, and articulates with the seventh cervical vertebra. There is a single case of a complete cervical rib, fused to a normal first rib, in the Agora baby well. While cervical ribs are usually asymptomatic in adults (Barnes 1994: 100-1), neonates with cervical ribs may experience temporary or permanent damage to the arm on the affected side, due to trauma to the brachial plexus nerves during birth (Becker et al. 2002: 740-1). Such infants may be born with or develop an arm that is white and limp, due to neurological and circulatory damage. While the condition may be temporary, such damage could well have caused this infant to be killed or exposed at birth.

The large collection of skeletons from the so-called Baby Well in the Agora excavations offers an unusual opportunity to investigate pathology and cause of death in neonates. The excellent condition of the bone has preserved evidence rarely seen in most archeological collections. In particular, anomalies associated with developmental defects are rarely seen in ancient skeletons but would unquestionably be present in any large population, such as that of Athens in the Hellenistic period. The presence of visible birth defects, whether lethal or not, would almost certainly have led to the decision to expose or kill the infant. Both options were legally available to the head of the family, particularly if the decision was made before the infant was formally incorporated into the family through the ceremony of the *Amphidromia*. While the bulk of the infants in the well probably died of natural causes, a small number of the infants may have been victims of this practice (see also the chapters by Laes and Evans Grubbs in this volume.)

The phenomenon of burial in disused wells has attracted considerable interest in Greece in the past few years (Little and Papadopoulos 1998; Papadopoulos 2000; Lindenlauf 2001; Liston 2011a, 2011b). Formal burial was an important aspect of Greek society for humans. Only traitors and those who broke the law were disposed of without burial rites (Demosthenes 25.1.58, 56.1.70). It has been argued that disposal of a human being without burial rites equated that individual with an animal (Lindenlauf 2001: 87). However, in the Geometric period some of the skeletons in the wells of the Athenian Agora do appear to have been accorded some burial rites, regardless of their informal deposition, perhaps as a means of meeting the cultural and religious requirement for burial of the dead while investing a minimal amount of expense and effort (Little and Papadopoulos 1998: 377-9).

The period immediately after birth is when the largest percentage of infants die (Bonar 1937: 572; Faerman and Smith 2008: 211-2). Presumably the midwife, who could have been involved during pregnancy, was normally present during birth, was responsible for the initial inspection and care of the infant, and would also have attended to the mother and newborn in the subsequent days (Soranus, *Gyn.* 2.2-2.6). If the infant died, the midwife would have disposed of the body (Plato, *Theaetetus* 151c). The period immediately following the birth of an infant is one for which there is little textual evidence. It was a period of danger for both the mother and infant, but the literary record is largely silent on the care provided or other events in the household (Hall 2006: 62-3). Unfortunately, our chief source of information on the duties and actions of the midwife, the second-century CE medical author Soranus, is fragmentary and largely lost in the section that deals with postpartum care of the mother (French 1986: 77).

We do know that the midwife was an important participant in the rites of passage known as the Amphidromia and *dekate* (naming day) that followed shortly after birth (Hamilton 1984: 243). The Amphidromia was the first rite marking formal acceptance into the family, and it was here that the creation of a legal social identity took place (Dasen 2011: 297, 303; see also Garland in this volume). Our chief source for this private family rite is Plato as well as comments from the scholiasts. They disagree on the age at which it took place (five, seven, or ten days) and on whether or not the rite also involved a naming ceremony. Some sources separate the Amphidromia from a naming ceremony on the tenth day (Hamilton 1984: 243–5). The event marked the end not only of the period of greatest danger of death for the infant (Aristotle *HA* 7.588a 8–10) but probably also of the mother's period of pollution after giving birth. The rite may also have ended the pollution for the other women who had been present at the birth, including the midwife, and who were also expected to participate in the Amphidromia and the naming ceremony (Garland 1990: 64; Demand 1994: 8; Dillon 2002: 254; Euripides *Electra* 1128–9).

The extensive sections on child care, including later developmental stages such as the loss of the umbilical cord, teething, and weaning in Soranus's gynecological treatise (Soranus *Gyn.* 2.18–22), indicate that in his time, at least, the midwife was expected to remain in contact with the infant's caretakers and retained some degree of responsibility or authority after the birth of the infant (French 1986: 78), and a Roman midwife was expected to clean up after the birth (Horace, *Epodes* 17.51). Since the midwife was involved in postpartum care of the mother and infant, she would be a likely candidate to dispose of the corpse of an infant who died, particularly before the Amphidromia or naming ceremony had incorporated the child into the family.

For Athenian midwives tasked with disposing of the remains of infants who died at birth or in the following days, an isolated abandoned well, conveniently located near the center of town, might be an attractive place to deposit the bodies. Over the approximately fifteen-year span suggested by the pottery in the well, on average only thirty infants per year would have been disposed of here. This is probably well below the number of perinatal deaths in Athens during this time but is perhaps well within the number of deaths that would be encountered by a small number of midwives attending the women of Athens during childbirth. Midwives would be the one class of participant consistently present in the days around the birth of a large number of infants. The location of the well was perhaps one among the many secrets to which these women were privy, and it provided a convenient means for them to complete their duties in those unfortunate cases when the child did not survive.

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CHAPTER 4

INFANT EXPOSURE AND INFANTICIDE

JUDITH EVANS GRUBBS

INTRODUCTION

INFANT exposure in the ancient world has been often discussed and fiercely debated, and many scholars have written sensitively and authoritatively on the subject (see the Note on Further Reading at the end of this chapter). Unlike the broader term *abandonment*, exposure¹ denotes the rejection of a neonate in the first week of life, before it has been accepted into the family and undergone rituals of purification and naming (on which see the chapters by Garland, Dasen, and McWilliam in this volume). It is important that a distinction be made between exposure and killing, although quite often exposure did result in the child's death. But intention and means might be quite different: drowning and smothering, for instance, were more immediate and effective means of ending a child's life than putting it out in a public (or even secluded) place, where there was a chance that someone would pick it up. And of course there are many gray areas: would keeping a child, but neglecting and undernourishing him so that he soon died, be infanticide? Would leaving a baby in a wild and deserted place where no one was likely to find her be infanticide whereas putting her out in a well-frequented area would be exposure? In earlier scholarly literature there was a tendency to confuse the two, but John Boswell's (1988) landmark study changed the direction of the debate. Although Boswell was overly optimistic about the fate of *expositi*, he showed not only that many survived but also that parental intentions in exposing them were more conflicted and complex than had often been assumed.

Exposure was widespread in the ancient world, where reliable means of preventing conception were not widely used and abortion was a dangerous undertaking for the mother.² But the circumstances under which exposure might occur, and the reasons for

¹ From Latin *expositio*, "placing out." Cf. the Greek terms *ekthesis* and *apothesis* (Huys 1989).

² Riddle's 1992 argument for widespread use of contraception has met with opposition: see Frier 1994; Hin 2011.

it, would vary according to time, place, and social and economic status. The number of exposed infants would have been much fewer in rural areas and villages where there was less anonymity and far fewer people overall than in huge urban centers like imperial Rome, especially those that were transportation hubs receiving transient populations. This certainly was the case in later historical periods, and it is notable that infant abandonment did not (again) begin to be perceived as a social problem in the West until the early modern period, when cities had reached the size of classical Rome (see Ransel 1988; Kertzer 1993; Gavitt 1994; Hunecke 1994). What follows is a rather sweeping synthetic account of the causes, effects, and social and legal responses to exposure in Greek and Roman antiquity, from the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE. I draw on literary, legal, papyrological, and (where possible) archeological evidence. What is missing, regrettably, is what we would most like to know: the actual demographic impact of exposure in ancient Greece and Rome and the thought processes and emotions of those who abandoned a newborn to the elements.

Most of the evidence for exposure and infanticide is literary and subject to the needs and conventions of its genre (see Pratt in this volume). This is most notably the case with dramatic works—both tragedy (e.g., Euripides' *Ion* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*) and New Comedy where the timely recognition of a previously abandoned child appears regularly—and also rhetorical exercises (Seneca's *Controversiae* and the *Minor Declamations* attributed to Quintilian), which intentionally focus on sensational and far-fetched scenarios to engage the attention of young men studying oratory.³ But even sources that appear more sober and reliable need to be interrogated, such as the famous passage from Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* (16.1–2) describing the Spartan practice of submitting newborn babies to the tribal elders to determine the infant's viability and fitness to be reared. Newborns judged to be lowborn or deformed were dispatched to a place called the Apothetai, a pit at the foot of Mt. Taygetos, while those deemed suitable were given an allotment of land and raised to take their place in Spartan society. This information is often cited as an illustration of the quintessential Spartan character, yet, as Marc Huys (1995) pointed out, it is found only in Plutarch, who wrote hundreds of years after Lycurgus was supposed to have lived. It is better seen as part of the "Spartan mirage," enhanced by fourth-century BCE philosophical utopian models (ibid.; see also the chapters by Kennell and Patterson in this volume). It is no more historical than the law of Romulus cited by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

MOTIVATIONS

What were the motivations behind the decision to abandon, or even to kill, a newborn? The sources reveal several major causes, which accord with reasons for getting rid of an

³ Seneca *Contr.* 9.3; Pseudo-Quintilian *Decl. Min.* 278, 306; Boswell 1988: 57, n. 6; Bernstein 2009: 343–50.

infant in later societies for which there is more evidence. In many cases, of course, more than one factor would be at work, and a combination of misfortunes would impel parents to expose (see also Patterson 1985).

Discussions of infant exposure in antiquity often invoke the father's right to decide a newborn's fate; those whom he did not accept into the family were killed or exposed. Perhaps the so-called *ius exponendi* (right of exposing, a modern term) was subsumed in the *ius vitae ac necis* (right of [deciding] life or death) wielded by the Roman *paterfamilias* (Harris 1986; but see Westbrook 1999: 208–9; cf. Shaw 2001). Most often, however, it was the “fatherless” babies who were exposed: not only illegitimate children (though that probably was the largest group) but also those conceived within marriage but born after the parents' divorce or the father's death. (Legally these last were not fatherless since they had been conceived in marriage, but they were vulnerable to exposure due to the absence of a living father or his repudiation of them.) In fact, often the decision to expose was made by the mother, sometimes without even consulting the father. Women were the first to see the baby as it was born; the medical writer Soranus gives instructions for what the midwife is to look for when assessing the newborn's viability (*Gyn.* 2.6.10 in Temkin 1956: 79–80). The midwife would be the likely person to dispose of the body of an infant who died at or shortly after birth (see the chapter by Liston and Rotroff in this volume) and might also be the one to take an unwanted live infant and expose it or hand it over to someone who wanted a child. It was when there was no father in the picture that the baby was least likely to be raised.

There are surprisingly few references to premarital sex resulting in pregnancy—almost all in literary works and usually as a result of rape, either by drunken young men at nighttime festivals or by gods.⁴ Several causes account for this lack of evidence. One is that women married young, especially among the upper classes, and a girl married in her mid-teens was less likely to have had premarital sex than a young woman in her twenties. Another reason, likewise especially among the elite, was the protection and relative seclusion in which young women would live before marriage; rape and abduction were likely to occur only on occasions when a woman was out of the house and in a less controlled situation. But also, of course, we must take into account the delicacy of the subject, even in fiction; it was just a bit too shocking to envision a young woman taking her sexuality into her own hands before marriage and suffering the consequences. Thus, in New Comedy generally rape, not seduction, leads to premarital pregnancy, which in turn leads to exposure (Fantham 1975: 53–4; cf. Pierce 2002: 178). The subsequent plot complications and ultimate recognitions and reconciliations are implausible devices for advancing the plot, but it is quite likely that the offspring of rape would be exposed unless the rapist (or a generous or unaware third party) married the victim. Probably in “real life” premarital pregnancy would often be covered up by a quick marriage followed by a seemingly premature birth. If the father either would not or could

⁴ By gods: *Ion* (Apollo); Romulus and Remus (Mars). By drunken young men, a frequent topos of New Comedy: for example, Menander's *Epitrepontes* and Terence's *Hecyra*; Pierce 2002.

not marry the mother (e.g., if he was already married or was of significantly higher social class or too closely related) and no other husband could be found in a hurry, a period of seclusion for the mother followed by exposure of the child would be the preferred solution. (Abortion was another option but was more risky for the mother.)

A baby conceived in an adulterous relationship might also be exposed, although normally it would be assumed to be the child of the mother's husband unless he explicitly repudiated it. Augustus ordered the exposure of the baby of his disgraced granddaughter Julia the Younger (Suetonius *Aug.* 65.3), and Claudius denied paternity of a child born to his ex-wife Urgulanilla (Suetonius *Claud.* 27). Claudius' action was particularly shocking because the baby was already being raised; exposure normally followed closely upon birth, and by initially accepting the baby Claudius had implicitly acknowledged her as his child (Corbier 1999: 1262; 2001: 54). Apart from such scandals in the imperial family, our sources almost never mention that a child conceived within marriage was the consequence of the wife's adultery, although the situation was probably not rare (Syme 1960).

There is more evidence for the exposure of babies born to widows or divorcées. Indeed, the end of a marriage might itself be the cause of an infant's exposure. An Alexandrian papyrus from the Augustan period records the agreement between Dionysarion, a pregnant widow, and her former mother-in-law Hermione. Dionysarion acknowledges receipt of her dowry and relinquishes all further claim on her husband's estate, and Hermione in turn permits Dionysarion to expose the baby and remarry (*BGU* 4.1104, 8 BCE; also see Parca in this volume). In the case of divorce, although the ex-husband would have legal claim and presumed paternity over the child his ex-wife was carrying, he might suspect that it was not his (particularly if the divorce had been caused by doubts about his wife's fidelity), or an estranged wife might prefer to get rid of the child rather than hand it over to a man she resented. The Augustan grammarian Melissus was exposed following a quarrel between his parents, presumably followed by divorce (Suetonius *de Grammaticis* 21; cf. Sigismund-Nielsen in this volume). A clause in Gortyn's Great Law Code in Crete (ca. 450 BCE) required a woman who gave birth after divorce (to a child conceived during marriage) to bring it to her husband at his home with three witnesses present; if he rejected it, she had the right to raise or expose it. If she exposed the baby without previously presenting it, she was fined unless her ex-husband had no house or could not be found (Col. III.44–IV.17 in Willets 1967: 41–2). This is, I believe, the earliest extant reference to exposure in the Greco-Roman world.

Under Roman law, children conceived within marriage belonged to their father, and if he died his natal family would have a claim on his children, even those born posthumously. Roman law made provision for both pregnant widows and divorcées, both to safeguard the paternity and inheritance rights of the unborn child and to enable a dubious husband (or his family) to question the child's legitimacy. Under a clause of the Praetor's Edict, a widow was to notify her husband's family within a month of discovering she was pregnant and give them an opportunity to recognize and ultimately claim the child. The pregnancy was to be confirmed by other women (presumably including at least one midwife), and the deceased man's relatives could even have the birth

monitored to be sure that someone else's baby was not brought in surreptitiously (*Dig.* 25.4.1–2, Ulpian; Evans Grubbs 2002: 261–4).⁵ We know of a case in Roman Egypt where this procedure was used (*P.Gen.* 2.103; Rowlandson 1998: 289–91; Hanson 2000: 158–9).

A senatorial decree of the early second century CE, the *senatusconsultum Plancianum*, called for much the same procedure when a woman found out she was pregnant shortly after being divorced (*Dig.* 25.3.1, Ulpian; Evans Grubbs 2002: 200–2; see also McGinn in this volume). In this case, the ex-husband was still alive and could deny paternity; if he did not, he implicitly acknowledged the child as his. If he did refuse to recognize the baby, the mother might decide to expose it. The Antonine jurist Scaevola discusses a case where a repudiated wife did not even tell her ex-husband (who had remarried) about her child but exposed it instead. The boy was picked up and raised by a third party and actually called by his father's name—which implies that the rescuer knew who he was. After the father's death, the rescuer presented the boy, who was recognized by his mother and paternal grandmother and ultimately allowed to inherit his father's estate (*Dig.* 40.4.29; Evans Grubbs 2010).

The Greek novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, probably written early in the Roman imperial period, illustrates in fiction the dilemma that an unexpected pregnancy would pose for a husbandless woman. The heroine, who was married but had been captured by pirates and sold into slavery away from home, discovers she is pregnant. She deliberates whether to destroy the child or see it raised as a slave. Salvation comes when her master falls in love with her and ultimately marries her, enabling her to pass off her first husband's child as the premature offspring of her second (Chariton 2.8–10; Schwartz 1999).

The possibility that a man, like Callirhoe's second husband, might unwittingly be bringing up as his own someone else's child, caused some anxiety among Greek and Roman men, as did the thought that a substitute baby might be smuggled in at the birth when no men were present, with the result that a supposititious heir would receive the family estate.⁶ The elaborate procedure devised by Roman law to monitor the pregnancy and childbirth of pregnant divorcees or widows reflects this anxiety. Such substitution might well have occurred when the woman's baby was born dead or died shortly after birth. In a society where childbearing and the passing on of property were considered the primary purposes of marriage, women were under enormous pressure to produce a healthy heir. Substitute babies might themselves be *expositi*, obtained via local female networks (Patterson 1985: 116).

Infants born noticeably handicapped or deformed in some way would be less likely to be reared than healthy babies. Historians of antiquity used to take it for granted that disabled newborns would have been exposed or even killed, but recently some scholars have questioned this assumption (Edwards 1996; Scott 2001a; cf. Scott 1999: 69–70) and

⁵ The date of this clause of the Praetor's Edict is debated. Watson 1974 [1970] puts it at least as far back as the mid-first century BCE, but Metro 1964 argues that it is Hadrianic.

⁶ *Dig.* 25.4.1.13 (Ulpian); Terence *Andria* l. 514–15; Dio Chrys. 15.8; Pseudo-Quintilian *Decl. Min.* 338; Hanson 1994: 178–80.

elsewhere in this volume, Christian Laes demonstrates that some children with disabilities were raised and might even reach adulthood (see also Dasen 2009b). Some defects, like deafness or muscular dystrophy, would not even show up for some time, long after the week or so after birth in which it was considered appropriate to expose a child. Even when it was clear the child was not “normal,” such as a baby born with Down’s syndrome, parents might be reluctant to get rid of it. Aristotle’s recommendation in the *Politics* (7.4.10) that a law be made forbidding the rearing of defective babies implies that many people *did* rear their handicapped children (Germain 1975: 232–4). Roman jurists debated whether “monstrous” births qualified as children under the Augustan marriage laws, which rewarded parents of three or more children and penalized the childless.⁷ Evidently some parents were rearing children with disabilities, perhaps to meet the laws’ requirements (Allély 2004: 91–5). Mildly handicapped children may have been raised, particularly in royal families; note the cases of the Spartan king Agesilaus and the Roman emperor Claudius (see the chapters by Kennell and Laes in this volume). Some may have been exploited in freak shows or used as beggars to evoke compassion from passersby.⁸

However, many parents would feel they could not make the investment of time, resources, and emotion in raising a severely disabled child, especially if they already had several healthy children. Moreover, in the Roman republican period, there was a belief that such “monsters” were sinister prodigies that needed to be expiated by the infant’s death (den Boer 1979: 93–116; Schrage 1995: 469–74; Allély 2004: 84–6). Even in the early Principate, according to the philosopher Seneca, “We extinguish portentous offspring (*portentosos fetus*), and we even drown children (*liberos*) if they were born weak and monstrous” (*de Ira* 1.15.2). In cases of severe deformities, exposure or indeed infanticide is likely. Liston and Rotroff in this volume suggest that, whereas most of the babies found in the Hellenistic Agora well had died naturally, those born with noticeable birth defects were victims of exposure or infanticide. In the case of cleft palate or other physical deformities like spina bifida, the baby would not have survived long anyway (Bourbou and Themelis 2010: 113).

Poverty, whether chronic or temporary, was also a reason that many newborns were exposed. In other time periods for which we have more information, such as early modern Italy and eighteenth-century Russia, the parents’ poverty and the mother’s need to work were common reasons for abandonment. The ancient world was racked by frequent, localized food crises and occasional serious famines, and at such times children, particularly infants, were especially at risk (Garnsey 1988: 63–8). The writings of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa depict the devastating effects of famine in Cappadocia in the later fourth century CE, among which was the abandonment or sale of children by their parents (Holman 2001: 64–88). Some official measures were taken to combat the effects of poverty. One of the motives behind Trajan’s establishment of alimentary

⁷ *Dig.* 50.16.135 (Ulpian); cf. the *Sententiae Pauli* (“Opinions of Paulus”) at *Dig.* 1.5.14.

⁸ Garland 1995: 46–55; Allély 2004: 95–8; Parkin 2006; cf. Seneca *Contr.* 10.4.

schemes was to encourage Italian parents to rear more children; the alternative would have been exposure or infanticide (Duncan-Jones 1982: 288–319; see also McGinn in this volume). Similarly, in the early fourth century Constantine passed a law, intended to “keep the hands of parents from parricide” and ordering that support (*alimenta*) and clothing immediately be given to needy parents in Italy “since the rearing of infant children cannot bear delays” (*CTheod.* 11.27.1; Evans Grubbs 2009: 123–4).

Slave women, too, might be compelled to expose their infants. We tend to assume that slave owners would see their slaves’ reproduction as in their own interest, but this was not necessarily the case. A slave woman’s duties (such as wet-nursing her master’s child) might prevent her caring for her own child, or, in smaller households, a slave’s baby might be seen as too great an additional burden. The Roman elite household contained a variety of enslaved child-minders to care for both slave and free children (Dixon 1988: 141–67; Bradley 1991: 13–102) and therefore could accommodate slave babies. But this was not typical of slave-owning households in the empire, most of which had only a few slaves. Indeed, the slave woman herself might prefer to give up the child rather than see him raised in slavery (Dio Chrysostom 15.8). A rescript of Alexander Severus responds to a slave owner named Claudius who wanted to know if he could claim ownership over an *expositus* abandoned by his slave woman. (He could but would owe costs of rearing or training to the one who picked up the child unless it had been stolen). Claudius had evidently been unaware of the exposure when it occurred but had later discovered what happened—and the child’s whereabouts (*CJust.* 8.51.1, 224 CE; Evans Grubbs 2010).

But even healthy children in intact, free families who were not struggling with poverty or food shortage might be abandoned. Poverty can be relative: in the Greek novel *Daphnis and Chloe*, where the pastoral lovers are both *expositi* later recovered by their parents, Chloe’s father claims he had been impoverished by his curial obligations and so was forced to abandon her (Longinus 4.35). Ancient moralists, both pagan and Christian, compare the poor, who expose out of desperation and inability to provide for additional mouths to feed, with the wealthy, who allegedly do not want to divide their estates among too many heirs. Musonius Rufus, a Roman Stoic philosopher of the first century who was himself of equestrian rank, deplored attempts to limit family size and criticized the wealthy who were “...so inhuman as not to rear later-born offspring in order that those earlier born may inherit greater wealth” (Mus. 15 in Lutz 1947: 99–101; cf. Polybius 36.17.5–10; Ambrose *Hexameron* 5.18 in *CSEL* 32.1). The rhetorical and moralizing context of such denunciations of greedy and selfish elites must always be taken into account, but wealthy landowners probably were reluctant to diminish the inheritance prospects of the children they had already by bringing up even more heirs. The Roman practice of partible inheritance and the rule that all legitimate children inherited a fair share unless explicitly disinherited served as a disincentive for large families. Moreover, the frequent use of wet nurses among the Roman elite would have increased the fertility of upper-class women (see Parkin in this volume), which might in turn have contributed to exposure of “excess” children.⁹

⁹ See Brulé 1992: 71–2, 85–6; cf. Lee 1994: 72.

Birth order and sex also played a role in determining whether a child would be reared. The shepherd hero of *Daphnis and Chloe* was the fourth-born child and was exposed because his father felt he had enough already; subsequently, two of the older children died, and Daphnis' father came to regret his decision (Longinus 4.24). In cases of multiple births, especially of more than twins, one or more babies may have been exposed. The birth of more than two babies at a time was apparently considered portentous (Dasen 1997, 2005). According to the Augustan writer Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome and an *expositus* himself, decreed that Romans raise all (healthy) boys and the firstborn girl and not kill any children before age three unless they were lame or "monstrous" from birth (*Roman Antiquities* 2.15; cf. 9.22.2–4). Those could be "put out" (*ektithenai*), but first the defective child had to be shown to five male neighbors to get their approval. This "law of Romulus" is as unhistorical as Romulus himself, but it probably reflects contemporary (Augustan) concerns about childrearing and perhaps also social practices (Eyben 1980–1981: 26–7; Harris 1994: 5).

Romulus' law also suggests that later-born female children might be less likely to be reared (cf. Brulé 1992: 82). Of all the motivations for exposure, the alleged desire to limit the female population is the one that has been most discussed and is the most controversial. In the 1980s, a lively debate centered on the theoretical possibility of female infanticide, with the upshot being that, from a demographic standpoint, it was *possible*.¹⁰ However, the case for widespread exposure of females has been hugely overblown, fueled by a few often repeated pieces of evidence and a belief that in the ancient world sons were preferred to daughters and therefore that female infants were less likely to be raised (see Scott 1999: 67–73, 2001a: 144–6, 2001b). This assumes not only that a preference for one sex will result in the casting out of the other but also that a prejudice expressed only sporadically (and usually in literary contexts) was applied universally in the Greek and Roman world.

In fact, most of our legal, literary, and documentary references to exposure do not mention the child's sex, and when they do as often as not it is a boy. This has been obscured by focus on sources such as the notorious letter from a certain Hilarion to his wife Alis (and two other women in the household) in early Roman Egypt, which contains the injunction to raise the child that is to be born if it is a boy and "throw it out" if it is a girl (*P. Oxy.* 4.744, 1 BCE). The letter's language is actually far from clear, and the baby in question may not have been Alis' but that of a subordinate member of the household (West 1998; but see McKechnie 1999). In any case, this is a single text, one letter out of thousands known, and alludes to the family situation of one couple only. Nursing contracts from Roman Egypt show clearly that male neonates as well as female were exposed.¹¹

¹⁰ Engels 1980; Golden 1981; Harris 1982; Patterson 1985; cf. Parkin 1992: 98–102.

¹¹ Of the twelve *anaireto*i (exposed infants who were picked up to be used as slaves) whose nursing contracts are published in *CPapGr* 1, six were female, four male, and two unknown (Masciadri and Montevicchi 1984: 11–2, see also 32–5).

Other documentary evidence from Greek and Roman Egypt, albeit fragmentary and far from complete, may be more indicative of female exposure, or at least an unnatural sex imbalance. Willy Clarysse and Dorothy Thompson (2006), after thorough analysis of the tax registers relating to the salt tax in Ptolemaic Egypt, conclude tentatively that the sometimes quite extreme gender imbalance found in the records of Greek adult residents, where males greatly predominate over females, might result from the practice of female exposure among the Greek population. Interestingly, families headed by Egyptians did not show an imbalance, suggesting that such selective exposure may have been due to cultural and social norms brought from the homeland of the original Greek settlers (vol. 2: 307–17; see also Parca in this volume). The Greek cultural preference for males evidently continued under Roman rule: in their study of the census returns from Roman Egypt, Roger Bagnall and Bruce Frier (1994) found that sons outnumbered daughters by more than two to one among the families of the metropoleis, the capital cities of the nomes (districts), where descendants of the Greek settlers lived. On the other hand, in the country villages, predominantly inhabited by native Egyptians, almost twice as many daughters as sons were recorded. In metropolitan families, where there was only one child, it was more likely to be a male, but in the villages the opposite was true. The authors suggest that the Greek metropolitan families may have been somewhat more likely to practice “infanticide or exposure, especially of females” (p. 152) but note that “the returns provide no clear evidence that its rate was appreciable” (p. 164). Daughters evidently were underreported by metropolitan families (pp. 42, 81); as Walter Scheidel (2005) pointed out, this does not mean they were exposed but “merely [that they were] undervalued enough to be passed over in silence” (p. 73; cf. Scheidel 2010: 4). The same could be said about the inscriptions from late third-century BCE Miletus, which recorded the names of Greek mercenaries who received citizenship along with their families, an act seen as indicating exposure or infanticide of females (Pomeroy 1983). About four times as many sons as daughters are recorded in these inscriptions; indeed, there are far fewer children overall than would be natural in a sample of this size (Parkin 1992: 99). But here too, the extreme sex imbalance can be explained as a result of underrecording nonadult females rather than of doing away with them (Scheidel 2010: 2–3). In any case, mercenaries were not typical of Greek populations in general (Patterson 1985: 111).

The assumption that ordinarily parents would get rid of girl rather than boy babies causes scholars to reach for sometimes far-fetched explanations when the evidence appears to suggest otherwise. When the remains of one hundred skeletons of neonates were found in a sewer beneath a bathhouse in late Roman Ashkelon, excavators not unreasonably suspected infanticide (Smith and Kahila 1992). DNA analysis revealed that of the nineteen infants whose sex could be determined (less than 20% of the total), fourteen were males. Surprised, the excavators surmised that the bathhouse must have been associated with a brothel, and the babies were those of prostitutes, who preferred to raise girls since they could follow in their mother’s profession (Dauphin 1996; Stager and Smith 1997; Faerman et al. 1998). In other words, it is assumed that only sex workers would expose boys in larger numbers than girls. But the bathhouse probably was no

longer in use at the time the neonates were deposited in its sewer, so the supposed connection with prostitution is unfounded (Scott 1999: 68; cf. Scott 2001a: 146, 2002b: 11–2). Prostitutes were more likely to need to get rid of an infant (male or female) than other women, but we should not assume that women who got rid of infants were prostitutes. However, this looks like archeological evidence for infanticide on a large scale and not simply the result of an epidemic.¹²

I also question the often repeated assertion that the need to provide a dowry for a girl, some twelve to twenty years down the line, would be an incentive to expose her. (Do American couples have abortions to avoid paying for a college education eighteen years later?) Dowries were not the crushing financial burden that they have been at some other periods in history, at least not in classical Athens or among the Roman elite, the populations for which we have the most evidence. Moreover, they served an important social purpose, in addition to providing insurance for a daughter in the event of divorce or widowhood, by cementing alliances and making a statement about the family's position (Ingalls 2002 on Athens; Saller 1984, 1994: 204–24 on Rome). Cassius Dio's statement that Augustus allowed all Roman men except senators to marry freedwomen because there were more males than females among the *eugeneis* (well-born or perhaps simply freeborn; Dio 54.16.1–2) has suggested to some that upper-class families were limiting the number of daughters they reared by exposing girls (McGinn 2002, 2004). But Dio was writing two centuries after Augustus, and his assertion is probably his own attempt to explain Augustus' encouragement of marriage between freeborn men and freedwomen (cf. Parkin 1992: 99–101; Treggiari 1996: 888). When the Roman equestrian Musonius Rufus denounces the exposure of later-born children to preserve the inheritance portions of the older, he says nothing about girls being more likely to be exposed than boys; in fact, one of his arguments against exposure is that it deprives those already born of the *brothers* they otherwise would have had (Musonius 15 in Lutz 1947: 100).

This is not to deny that female infants were exposed and that some parents (like Hilarion in *P.Oxy.* 4.744) decided to expose a girl when they would have raised a boy. But other factors were at least as important and interacted with sex preference, especially birth order and the family's immediate circumstances.¹³ Exposure was almost always an ad hoc decision made if the crops had failed, if there was no father or the mother had died at birth, if there were noticeable birth defects, if it was believed that there was just not enough to go around, or (sometimes) if the baby turned out to be the wrong sex. Moralists like the Stoic Musonius Rufus, the Jewish philosopher Philo (*The Special Laws* III.110–9 [Loeb edition]; Reinhartz 1992) and Christian apologists (Koskenniemi 2009: 88–140) inveighed against exposure, but only in the late Roman period were large-scale legal measures taken to restrict the practice.

¹² May 1993 saw some infant burials in Roman Britain as indicating infanticide, but see Scott 1999: 110–4; Gowland 2001; Baills-Talbi and Dasen 2008: 603; cf. Becker 1995.

¹³ Another, presumably quite rare, reason to expose was anger and grief at the gods or the current regime: see Versnel 1980; Suetonius *Calig.* 5; cf. Cassius Dio 61.16.2.

CONSEQUENCES

What happened to babies who were exposed? Surely death was very often the result, and, at least subconsciously, those who abandoned newborns must have realized that. But those who chose to expose rather than to kill outright (which would have been more merciful if they really intended the child to die) must have had some hope, however misguided, that the child would survive and be picked up by someone else. In fact, we hear much more about this eventuality than about the deaths of *expositi*, not because it was more likely but because of the legal problems that arose later. There probably were places in villages and cities where newborns were known to be put out; in Egypt, the dung heap was evidently such a place, and Juvenal speaks of “foul pools” (*lacus spurcos*), probably sewers or waste repositories, where women wishing to acquire a baby to pass off as their husband’s would go (*Sat.* 6.602–3; see previous discussion of supposititious babies). Of course, for *expositi* who were picked up to survive, they would need immediate sustenance, so a wet nurse would have to be hired if there was no lactating woman in the household (large Roman households might be able to rely on a slave woman who had recently given birth: Bradley 1986, 1991: 13–36). The nursing column (*lactaria columna*) in Rome was probably not a place where infants in need of sustenance were put but rather where wet nurses could be hired (Corbier 1999: 1270–1, 2001: 62–3)—including nurses for rescued *expositi*.

Usually, those who survived abandonment would be reared as slaves.¹⁴ Debate over the demographic consequences of exposure has evolved from arguing the likelihood of a relatively high rate of female “infanticide” to assessing what proportion of the slave population were foundlings.¹⁵ From the correspondence between Pliny the Younger and Trajan, we know that disputes over the status of exposed children who had been raised as slaves were frequent enough to elicit more than half a dozen imperial responses to provincials in Achaia (Roman Greece) as well as Pliny’s province of Bithynia. There is also evidence from Egypt, where over forty papyri relating to the hiring of wet nurses have been found.¹⁶ In these documents, almost all from the first two and half centuries of Roman rule, the parent or (much more often) the owner of a newborn contracts with a lactating woman to nurse the child, usually for a period of about two years. Most of the nurslings were slaves, and twelve of these were *anairetoi* (picked-up ones) acquired from the local dung heap.¹⁷ This suggests another motivation for exposure: the contracts

¹⁴ Biezunska-Malowist 1971; Motomura 1988; Harris 1994: 9–11, 18–9; Evans Grubbs 2010; Scheidel 2011: 298–9.

¹⁵ Harris 1994, 1999 vs. Scheidel 1997, 2005; see now Scheidel 2011. See McKeown 2007: 124–40 on the debate.

¹⁶ Masciadri and Montevicchi 1984 (= *CPapGr.* 1); also *SB* 22.15614 (Bingen 2006) and *PDuk* inv. 915 (Bergamasco 2006).

¹⁷ Of the thirty-one cases where the nursling’s status could be determined, twenty-three were slave and only seven free (Masciadri and Montevicchi 1984, 11, 16–20, 30–1).

usually specify that the nurse is not to feed another child at the same time and is not to get pregnant while nursing. Thus, the nurses themselves, if they followed the contract, would not only have their sex lives restricted (Bradley 1987: 70–3) but also might have to give up their own baby before the baby was old enough to wean to feed someone else's (Garnsey 1991: 61).¹⁸ The nurse might find herself forced to abandon her own baby, as in early modern Florence, when hired wet nurses had either to find other nurses for their children or leave them in a foundling hospital. Slave owners were willing to sacrifice the baby of one of their lactating slaves to make her available for the free women of the household (Klapisch-Zuber 1985: 140–2; Gavitt 1994: 80–2). Certainly, we know that in Rome the bond between an enslaved wet nurse and her nursling could continue after weaning (Bradley 1991: 13–36; on wet nurses see also the chapters by Parkin and Pudsey in this volume), but there must have been slave owners in antiquity who were as selfish as those in later Florence.

For the cost of two years' nursing wages, the rescuer of a newborn off the dung heap could get a slave who could later be sold at a profit, although of course there was a risk that the child would die. Sometimes a hired wet nurse was not even necessary; in a papyrus from fourth-century CE Kellis in the Dakleh Oasis, a couple contracts to sell a female slave "taken up from the ground" whom the wife herself had fed "with my own milk" (*P.Kell.G.* 8, 362 CE; Bagnall 1997). The census returns from Roman Egypt may also show traces of the "recycling" of abandoned newborns as slaves. Bagnall and Frier (1994) found that in the villages not only female children but also female *slaves* predominated; in the case of slaves, females outnumbered males by six to one. They suggest that the skewed sex ratios may reflect the practice by metropolitan families of abandoning girl infants, who were then picked up by villagers and raised as slaves and sometimes ultimately sold back to the metropoleis (pp. 158–9; Bagnall 1997).

Christian apologists claimed that some abandoned children, especially girls but also boys, were destined for the sex trade, and they raised the specter of dissolute parents later unwittingly having incestuous relations with the children they had abandoned.¹⁹ This played to the Roman *horreur d'inceste* (dread of incest; see Moreau 2002: 29–42, 151–64) but is not an entirely fantastical scenario, given the ubiquity of prostitution in the Greco-Roman world and the fact that newborns were usually exposed fairly close to home (Oedipus and Lycurgus' Spartans notwithstanding). The fourth-century BCE hetaira Neaira was (according to the man accusing her of illegally marrying an Athenian and passing off her daughter as his child) brought up by a woman on the lookout for exceptionally beautiful baby girls (Pseudo-Demosthenes 59.18); presumably she either bought them from their parents or picked up *expositae*. Other types of exploitation were also possible: one of the *Controversiae* of the Elder Seneca (*Contr.* 10.4) involves a beggar

¹⁸ Not all wet nurses were willing to do so: note *P.Oxy.* 1.37, 49 CE = *C.Pap.Gr.* 1.19.

¹⁹ Minucius Felix *Octavius* 31.4; Lactantius *Div. Inst.* 6.20; cf. Justin *Apol.* 27, 29; Tertullian *Apol.* 9.17; also mentioned by Pseudo-Quintilian *Decl. Min.* 278.8.

accused of “harming the state” by maiming *expositi* and using them to evoke compassion from passersby—who, according to one orator, might include the parents who had exposed them.

Slavery, including sex slavery, was the most likely fate of *expositi* who survived. But more fortunate children might end up in a quasi-filial role in a household or, rather, in a liminal position hovering between foster child and servile dependent, like the *threptoi* of the Greek east (especially Asia Minor) or the *alumni* of Rome and the western provinces. (Not all foster children were originally *expositi*: *alumni* were often the houseborn children of slaves or former slaves, perhaps the master’s child by one of his slaves, and *threptoi* were sometimes the biological children of friends or relatives who were handed over to the fosterer for rearing.²⁰) Scholars are now realizing that the “circulation” of children in the classical world was much more common than the image we have of “nuclear families” would suggest. In Roman households, *vernae* (houseborn slaves), *alumni*, *deliciae* (on whom see Sigismund-Nielsen in this volume), and other children of both slave and freed dependents occupied a special but subordinate place (Bradley 1991; Dixon 1999; Rawson 2010), and *expositi* might number among these. In the eastern Mediterranean, as Sabine Huebner (2007; see also Huebner’s chapter in this volume) demonstrates, the custom of adopting a child who would eventually marry the couple’s biological child long predated Roman rule. The adoptees were usually relatives, but in some cases they were *expositi*. An imperial rescript of the tetrarchic period (292–305 CE) to a petitioner named Rhodon relates to this practice: Rhodon wanted to marry his son to an *exposita* he had reared, but the girl’s father had turned up and was evidently refusing to consent to the marriage, which as *paterfamilias* he had a right to do (*CJust.* 5.14.16; Evans Grubbs 2010: 303–4). In Roman Egypt, the *Gnomon of the Idiologos* (the regulatory code of the chief financial officer for the province) said that if someone took a male baby off the dung heap, one-fourth of the rescuer’s property would be confiscated after his death. This rule, dating to the early second century CE and apparently unique to Roman Egypt, was intended to ensure that childless persons (whose property would otherwise have been claimable by the imperial fisc) would not cheat the state by taking an heir off the dung heap.²¹ Apparently such adoptions were known to occur. Although we should not assume that all those who bear copronyms (dung names, derived from *kopros*, the Greek word for dung²²) in Greco-Roman Egypt were taken off the dung heap, some no doubt were or perhaps were descended from an exposed child rescued from there.

What if the parent who had exposed a child wanted her back later, after she had been reared and perhaps enslaved by someone else? This situation precipitated some

²⁰ *Alumni*: Rawson 1986: 173–86; Sigismund-Nielsen 1987 and Sigismund-Nielsen (this volume); Bellemore and Rawson 1990; Smolaka Kotur 1994; Rawson 2003: 251–5. *Threptoi*: Cameron 1939; Nani 1943–1944; Bryce 1979: 310–3; Guinea 1998; Riel 2009; cf. Riel 2001: 156–8.

²¹ *Gnomon* 107; cf. *Gnomon* 41 which says an Egyptian who adopts (*huiopoiesetai*) a child from the dung heap has one quarter of his property confiscated after his death. See Montevicchi 1984.

²² On copronyms, see Pomeroy 1986; Hobson 1989; cf. Masson 1996: 147–50.

correspondence between Pliny the Younger and the emperor Trajan (Evans Grubbs 2010: 299–301). While governor of Bithynia-Pontus in the early second century, Pliny wrote to Trajan about what he said was “a great question, and one pertaining to the entire province” (*Ep.* 10.65; Sherwin-White 1966: 650–5; Williams 1990, 117–9). He was faced with disputes over the status of *threptoi* who had been brought up as slaves: if they were reclaimed as free, were rearing expenses (*alimenta*) owed to the rearers? Pliny knew of at least half a dozen imperial rulings on this question, one allegedly going back to the time of Augustus but the others all from the Flavian period. All of these related to the province of Achaëa, and several were explicitly addressed to the Lacedaemonians. In his response (*Ep.* 10.66), Trajan glossed *threptoi* as those who were born free but exposed (*expositi*) and then brought up in slavery; presumably the claimants Pliny was dealing with were the parents who had abandoned their children and were seeking to recover them.²³ The emperor noted that although the status of freeborn children exposed at birth and brought up as slaves had often been discussed, there was no general imperial policy applicable to all provinces. His own decision was that the reclaiming of free status by enslaved *expositi* should not be dependent on *alimenta* repayment.²⁴ From other evidence, too, it is clear that until the fourth century CE the Roman legal position on the status of freeborn *expositi* favored the liberty of even those held in slavery: if an enslaved *expositus* could prove free birth, then he or she had the right to reclaim it. The reality, of course, might be rather different: slaves could not bring legal actions themselves but would have to obtain *adsertores* (advocates) to act for them (see Evans Grubbs 2010).

When *expositi* were later reclaimed by their parents, the original act of “putting out” must have been done locally, and someone (perhaps the exposor, or the rescuer, or another party who was privy to the situation) knew their identity. This happened in the interesting case dealt with by the Roman jurist Scaevola, where the exposed baby of a divorced woman was ultimately recognized by mother and paternal grandmother (*Dig.* 40.4.29). In another case, the mother of the grammarian Melissus exposed him after a quarrel with her husband (presumably ending in divorce) but tried to reclaim him years later after he had been reared as a slave and given to the famous Maecenas. Melissus refused to comply, preferring to stay with Maecenas, who freed him (Suetonius *de Gram.* 21). Understandably, some *expositi* may have felt some resentment toward their exposor and preferred not to return if they had other options.

Third-century CE imperial rescripts (responses to petitioners) reveal several cases where the status and future of a foundling was in dispute because the exposor wished to reclaim his child or slave (Evans Grubbs 2010; see *CJust.* 8.51.1 and 5.4.16). Under classical Roman law, a *paterfamilias* retained *potestas* (legal power) over any child born to him and over his slaves and children born to his slavewomen, even if he (or someone else,

²³ However, not all *threptoi* were enslaved, and in Bithynia, where a large number of *threptoi* appear in inscriptions, most were evidently not (Guinea 1998).

²⁴ Scholars have debated whether Trajan’s policy drew on Roman law or Greek or local (Bithynian) law; see Evans Grubbs 2010.

such as his wife or one of his slaves) had exposed or sold them. But those who had picked up an exposed child could fairly claim that the child would otherwise have died and would at least want compensation for the costs of rearing, an issue frequently debated in rhetorical schools (Quint. *Inst.* 7.1.14, cf. 9.2.89; Pseudo-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 278, 376; Seneca *Contr.* 9.3).

EXPOSURE IN LATE ROMAN LAW

Such conflicts between the rescuers of *expositi* and those who had exposed them prompted Constantine to enact a general law in 331:

Whoever has taken up a boy or a girl, thrown out of its home by the wish and knowledge of its father or master and brought it up to strength with his own sources of support (*alimenta*), shall keep the same child under the same status as he wished to consider it when he took it up, that is, whether he has preferred it to be a son or a slave. All anxiety is to be removed regarding [the possibility of] reclamation on the part of those who knowingly, of their own will, threw out from their home recently born slaves or children.²⁵

For those who see *patria potestas* as one of the fundamental principles of Roman law and life, Constantine's law is rather extraordinary. It not only denies to the expositor the right to reclaim an exposed child (carefully specified to be either male or female and either a slave or the exposer's own child) but also gives rescuers the right to bring the child up however they wish, which means that a freeborn child could be raised as a slave without, apparently, the right to bring a claim for freedom at a later point. It is harsher to parents who exposed than to those who sold their newborn children, which was allowed under legislation of 329 (*CTheod.* 5.10.1; *CJust.* 4.43.2). Constantine clearly wanted to avoid the litigation over status and *alimenta* that had occurred so often in the earlier empire. He may also have been influenced by Christian denunciations of infant exposure, particularly by the Christian rhetor Lactantius, tutor to the emperor's son (Evans Grubbs 2009). It is impossible to know if the new policy discouraged exposure by parents and masters, but it may have encouraged recovery of *expositi* by those who had previously hesitated out of "anxiety" that the child would later be reclaimed. Notably, Constantine did not prohibit exposure but penalized it with loss of the rights of a *paterfamilias*.

This is apparently the first Roman attempt to set a uniform legal policy for exposure (earlier rescripts, like that of Trajan, had been directed either to particular provinces or were responses to individual petitions). Interestingly, it resembles a law, of unknown date but prior to the third century CE, that the sophist Aelian attributes to the Thebans

²⁵ *CTheod.* 5.9.1. On this and the following laws see Volterra 1939; Fossati Vanzetti 1983; Boswell 1988: 69–74; Memmer 1992; Lorenzi 2002; Tate 2008; Evans Grubbs 2009; Harper 2011: 391–423.

(*Varia Historia* 2.7). The Theban law allowed a poor man who could not rear a child to bring it to the authorities, who would hand it over to someone else to rear and later use as a slave. This law, which is nowhere else attested, also has similarities to Constantine's law allowing impoverished parents to sell a newborn. Perhaps local policies allowing those who raised *expositi* to enslave them already existed elsewhere in the empire and inspired Constantine's legislation. Such policies would run counter to the classical Roman legal principle that free birth (*ingenuitas*) could not be compromised by (illegal) enslavement, but legal and documentary evidence from the third century indicates that status lines were not so clearly drawn in practice. Abandoned neonates were completely defenseless and, whatever their birth status, were exposed to exploitation by those who picked them up. Constantine's legislation simply legalized two long-standing fates for *expositi* who survived: enslavement or adoption. Ostensibly these fates are quite different, but in reality they were intertwined, as the ambiguous status of *threptoi* and *alumni* shows.

Later emperors also addressed exposure. In 374, Valentinian I decreed, "Each person is to rear his own offspring. And if he thought it ought to be exposed, he will be liable to the punishment which has been decided" (*CJust.* 8.51.2). The punishment meant was probably loss of *patria potestas*, as in Constantine's law, although some scholars have thought Valentinian was referring to the capital penalty that he had decreed for infanticide in a law enacted only a month earlier.²⁶ A western law of 412 of the emperor Honorius repeats Constantine's ban on recovery of *expositi* by slave masters or patrons (here meaning masters of *coloni*) and says that rescuers who want to claim the infant need to get the signature of the local bishop as witness to the transaction (*CTheod.* 5.9.2; Tate 2008: 112–4). This is the first mention of the involvement of the Christian church in the redistribution of *expositi*, although even before this Christians, especially dedicated virgins, had been rescuing abandoned infants and bringing them up (Gregory of Nyssa *Vita Macrinae* 26.30; Augustine *Ep.* 98.6).

A church council held in Gaul three decades later details the procedure mandated in the law of 412: whoever picked up an *expositus* was to call the church as witness and obtain a (presumably written) attestation of this, and the discovery of a foundling was to be announced from the altar on Sunday; if the person who had abandoned it did not come forward to claim it within ten days, it was apparently the rescuer's to treat as he pleased. The council acted in response to numerous complaints that *expositi* were not being picked up because of fears of malicious prosecution (*calumnia*), apparently for kidnapping, by the exposer—the situation that Constantine's law had tried to avoid.²⁷ A somewhat different policy is found in the *Sententiae Syriacae*, a collection of rulings put together in Syria sometime in the fifth or sixth century that drew on late Roman laws, including Constantine's. According to the *Sententiae*, someone who picked up an *expositus* and raised him for ten years could then use his services (as a slave) for another ten. At age twenty, the *expositus* could reclaim his or her freedom. But if the person who

²⁶ *CTheod.* 9.14.1; see Eyben 1980–1981: 31–2; but cf. Fossati Vanzetti 1983: 213–5.

²⁷ Council of Vaison, canons 9–10 in CCL 148; Boswell 1988: 172–3; cf. 202–4, 217–8.

picked up a foundling declared his intention to rear the child as a slave before the *tabularius* (public registrar, who would record the information in writing), then the *expositus* remained his slave forever. In other words, official documentation was necessary to make the enslavement permanent.²⁸

Finally, in 529 Justinian (*CJust.* 8.51.3) proclaimed that all *expositi*, whatever their status at birth, would be automatically considered freeborn and could not be used or reclaimed as slaves, thus overturning Constantine's law of two centuries earlier. But this attempt to prevent enslavement of exposed children was ineffective. Twelve years later, after learning that people who had abandoned infants at the church in Thessalonica were attempting to reclaim them as slaves, Justinian had to reiterate his earlier law and add a more severe penalty, evidently death (*Novel* 153; Fossati Vanzetti 1983: 223–4).

CONCLUSION

Christianity did, I believe, make a difference in the Roman legal attitude to exposure and infanticide (Evans Grubbs 2009; cf. Koskenniemi 2009: 140–5). Constantine's law forbidding a father or slavemaster who had exposed a newborn to reclaim it, along with the alternative to marriage and childbearing offered by the Christian monastic movement enabling parents to give “excess” children to the church (Boswell 1984, 1988), probably also dissuaded some parents from exposure. But even before Christianity became the dominant discourse, attitudes toward exposure seem to have been changing. Whereas we hear almost nothing about exposure or infanticide in the Roman Republic (apart from New Comedy plots, taken from Greek models), in the late first and early second century a number of Roman and Greek writers—Stoic philosophers, of course, but also rhetorical writers, biographers, and jurists—mention infant exposure and its consequences. This is in part a response to the natalist concerns of emperors, especially Augustus, and to disputes over the legal status of *expositi* who survived (as seen, e.g., in Pliny's correspondence with Trajan). But it also indicates, I believe, an awareness of the fate of young children and a growing discomfort with the practice of getting rid of them. Beryl Rawson (2003) noted an increased focus on the child and child welfare in Roman imperial ideology and policy of the second century (pp. 59–70; also see McGinn in this volume). Christian apologists exploited this concern and discomfort (as rhetorical writers had done before them) with their denunciations of exposure and unpleasant descriptions of what happened to infants who were exposed. Ultimately, though not for more than two centuries, exposure and infanticide were considered so wrong as to elicit legal penalties.

²⁸ Memmer 1992: 21–6, 83–93, discussing §77 and §98 of the *Sententiae Syriacae*, which survive only in Syriac but were apparently originally in Greek.

And what of those who were never picked up and died where they had been left? There is no reason to disbelieve the claims of opponents of exposure that they became the prey of animals (Philo *Special Laws* III.115 [Loeb edition]; Lactantius *Div. Inst.* 6.20; Pseudo-Quintilian *Decl. Min.* 278.8; Koskenniemi 2009: 129–30). This could happen not only on remote mountaintops and in the countryside but also in the city, where packs of dogs no doubt roamed the streets; the clergy meeting at Vaison in 442 were responding to complaints that *expositi* were “exposed not to mercy but to dogs” (*non misericordiae iam sed canibus*). Those left on dung heaps or garbage piles would eventually decompose and add to the pile but would present a very unpleasant sight to dung gatherers or those depositing or rifling through garbage (cf. Scobie 1986: 419). Those left in more public places, in hopes that they would be taken up, would cry until they grew silent from exhaustion, starvation, and dehydration. Only then might they be retrieved: Galen tells us that those interested in human anatomy often dissected the corpses of exposed children (*De anatomicis administrationibus* 3.5; also see Dasen in this volume). Their bodies might even be used for magical purposes, as with the *brephos* (fetus or newborn), which a petitioner in late second-century CE Egypt claims was used to drive him away.²⁹ Otherwise, those responsible for the upkeep of the neighborhood would dispose of them. In Rome, this would have fallen to the aediles (or more likely the public slaves who worked for them); in Athens, one of the tasks of the *astynomoi* was to see that the corpses of those who had died “in the streets” were removed (Pseudo-Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 50.2). The corpses of unclaimed *expositi* might be thrown into a sewer (as at Ashkelon) or a well (cf. Liston and Rotroff in this volume). At Rome, they might end up in the Tiber, where, a millennium later, the number of dead babies retrieved by fishermen led Pope Innocent III to create a hospital and foundling home to prevent unmarried mothers from killing their children (Bolton 1994). Among the sights, sounds, and smells of the ancient city and village, we should imagine the wails of hungry babies (a very distressing sound, as any parent can attest), the stench of decomposing bodies, and the sight of infant bones and corpses.³⁰

SUGGESTED READING

The bibliography on infant exposure and infanticide in antiquity is enormous and continually growing. Eyben (1980–1981) is a fundamental survey of the sources (including Christian authors) with important discussion. On exposure in ancient Greece, see Germain (1969,

²⁹ *P. Mich.* 6.423–4; see Aubert 1989: 437; Frankfurter 2006; Bryen and Wypustek 2009.

³⁰ I would like to thank all those who commented on this chapter, especially those who attended the Colloquium on Childhood and Education in the Classical World held at the University of Manchester in August 2011; participants in the New Testament Research Colloquy in the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in March 2012; and Zachary Domach, Eric Moore, Maryline Parca, and Cynthia Patterson.

1975) and Patterson (1985) (especially good on motivation), with Oldenziel (1987) on the earlier historiography of the topic. Boswell (1988)'s groundbreaking and controversial book covers the literary, legal, and patristic evidence for child abandonment (including but not limited to exposure) in Roman and medieval culture. Also on Rome, see Parkin (1992: 95–102), Harris (1994), Corbier (1999, 2001), and Evans Grubbs (2010, 2011). For exposure of children in late Roman law, see Volterra (1939), Fossati Vanzetti (1983), Boswell (1988), Memmer (1992), Lorenzi (2003), Tate (2008), Evans Grubbs (2009), and Harper (2011: 391–423). Koskenniemi (2009) is a thorough treatment of exposure in ancient Judaism and patristic Christianity; on the impact of Christianity, see also Boswell (1988), Tate (2008), Evans Grubbs (2009, 2010), and Vuolanto (2011).

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CHAPTER 5

THE CHILD PATIENT OF THE HIPPOCRATICS: EARLY PEDIATRICS?

LESLEY DEAN-JONES

INTRODUCTION: THE ABSENCE OF THERAPY FOR CHILDREN IN THE *CORPUS* *HIPPOCRATICUM*

At many points in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (*CH*), authors comment on the importance of age in assessing the likelihood of disease, the significance of symptoms or the course of treatment for particular patients.¹ References to the importance of age are made at *Nature of Man* 9, *Regimen in Health* 2, *Regimen in Acute Diseases* (*Appendix*) 6 and 31, *Precepts* 14, *Regimen* I.2 and III.67, *Humors* 1, *Aphorisms* I.2 and 17, II.34 and III.3, *Epidemics* I.23 and II.3.2, *Diseases* I.22—and this is not an exhaustive list. In these discussions childhood is almost always one of the age categories. And when the Hippocratics group a population by gender to discuss nosology it is very rare that they divide the population into the categories of “male” (*arsen*) and “female” (*thelu*) as it is at *Epidemics* II.4.3 and VI.4.11. Much more commonly the groups are designated as “men” and “women,” and children are treated as a third group (e.g., *Airs, Waters, Places* 3 and 4, *Epidemics* II.3.16, VI.3.11).

There is across the *CH* a general agreement that women’s bodies differ significantly from those of men. Eleven treatises, about one-sixth of the entire *CH*, are specifically gynecological, and the focus therein on the reproductive system of women as the primary locus for disease and treatment is reflected in the references to female patients scattered throughout the rest of the *CH*. One passage suggests that children’s bodies are even more anomalous than women’s. *Prognosis* 24 ends a long chapter

¹ On the Hippocratic corpus, see “A Note on the Hippocratic Corpus” at the end of this chapter.

in which the author discussed various age groups—with no great emphasis on children—with the summary, “In assessing who will live and who will die among both *children and others*, use all the signs.” Yet despite the insistence on the importance of age and the frequent classification of children as a separate demographic, in the *CH* there are no treatises or large sections of treatises dedicated to the treatment of pediatric ailments.

All of this has led Janine Bertier (1990: 219) to declare, “On ne peut parler de médecine des enfants dans le *Corpus hippocratique*” and Nancy Demand (1994: 141) to state that in the *CH* “We see a gynecology in the making, but not a Hippocratic pediatrics.” Bertier’s article is a summary of most (though not all) of the passages dealing with children in the *CH* but includes very little by way of analysis. She concludes that an understanding of the need for a medicine aimed specifically at children was present in the Hippocratics “en germe” but that there was no unity of approach as there was in the later period of antiquity (Bertier 1990: 220). Considerable work has been recently forthcoming on the child patient in the later period of antiquity (e.g., Dasen 2003; Bradley 2005; Mudry 2004; Gourevitch 2010). When considering the reasons for the development of ancient pediatrics, these studies cite the ancient conception of the nature of children’s bodies as hot, moist, soft, and delicate (e.g., Dasen 2003: 185). If they do refer to Hippocratic material, like Bertier they limit themselves to a simple summary of passages. This is true even of Christine Hummel’s (1999) monograph, which begins the study of ancient pediatrics with Aretaeus in the first century CE. Hummel devotes only three pages to the Hippocratics—again a summary of passages—and concludes that rules for the therapy of children are not to be found in the *CH*.

Demand is the only scholar to have considered *why* the Hippocratics did not develop a pediatrics. She argues that the reasons the Hippocratics had for developing a gynecology—to assist male control over women—were not applicable in the case of children (Demand 1994: 141–7). Men, she says, “felt comfortably in charge” of children so doctors did not have the incentive to develop a pediatrics as they did a gynecology (p. 147). But this is too simplistic a view of the reasons for the development of any branch of medicine. Demand acknowledges that mortality would be high among children as among women (p. 142) and that fathers as well as mothers cared about their offspring (p. 147). Why then, on the occasions when traditional measures such as magic and folk and religious healing were seen to be ineffective would parents not turn to any other possible therapy? And why would the Hippocratics not proffer one when they could see the need—and the market—for it?

I will argue that the remarks Hippocratic authors do make about children’s ailments, as well as the paucity of child patients itself, suggest that there was a coherent Hippocratic model of the child’s body and that the most significant characteristic of this body was not so much its warmth, moisture, softness, or delicacy as the fact that it lacked the open passages of an adult’s body. This model presented a challenge for the typical Hippocratic methods of treatment, which led to doctors intervening less often in the course of a child’s disease than in that of an adult, with the notable exception of conditions originating in the head.

THE AGE PARAMETERS OF CHILDHOOD IN THE *CH*

In discussing individuals of a dry and cold nature, one author says that the healthiest are “children and those to either side of that age group” (*paides kai ta prosechonta hekateroisin, Regimen I.32*). This suggests that childhood was not a life-stage that began at birth for all Hippocratics (see Dasen in this volume). There are very few indications that they expected to number neonates among their clients. The care of the newborn seems to have fallen largely to midwives: *Diseases IV.54* says that women administer *pharmaka* to infants as soon as they are born to expel the feces and widen the intestines. But at least from the time they were weaned or had started to teethe to the age of puberty (which the Hippocratics placed around fourteen years), children were categorized in their own age demographic, distinct from both “those in their prime” (*akmazontes*, a term designating individuals from about twenty-five to forty-five; e.g., *Prorrhetic II.9*) and young adults (*parthenoi, neaniskoi, meirakia*). According to *Fleshes 13*, a child becomes a *neaniskos* between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. *Coan Prognoses 502* says that between the ages of fourteen and forty-two the body is subject to all diseases, but before and after this age group individuals are immune to some diseases.

There were also significant distinctions within the age demographic of childhood, particularly the age of seven, which was associated with second dentition (e.g., *Fleshes 12*; *On the Eighth Month Fetus 8*; *Prognosis 24*; *Coan Prognoses 333, 351*). *Prognosis 19* declares that a certain type of illness with hardness and pain in the bladder attacks children (*paidia*) between the ages of seven and fifteen. *Fleshes 13* says that a child becomes an *anthropos* when he is *epidelos*, and this tends to occur between the ages of seven and fourteen. It is unclear exactly what the terms *anthropos* and *epidelos* mean here, but it seems unlikely that they mean “adult” and “pubescent.” From his statement identifying the age range for *neaniskoi* as fourteen to twenty-one we have seen that this author, like most Hippocratics, expects puberty to occur, or at least begin, around fourteen. Even if he recognized that some children could mature earlier than fourteen, it is doubtful that he would call someone of seven, eight, nine, or even ten years an adult. The statement comes in a discussion of the development of dentition and refers rather to the point at which a child would have all its adult teeth, that is, would have all the *parts* of the mature human body, though not necessarily all the functions. (The author recognizes the possibility of wisdom teeth but says they do not develop in everybody; he would therefore not consider them necessary to the human form.) In discussing the types of diseases that attack certain ages, *Aphorisms III* spends five chapters (24–8) on the ailments of *paidia* and *paides* from newborn to puberty. The first four chapters progress one by one through the categories of newborns, those approaching dentition, those who were older, and those who were older and close to puberty. Chapter 28 lists the crises of childhood diseases as happening in forty days, seven months, seven

years, and the approach of puberty. In Chapter 29 the author moves on to discussing *neaniskoi*.

But while it may be possible to identify a demographic of children in Hippocratic writings, it is less easy to identify unequivocally individual children in their case histories. There is sometimes sufficient circumstantial information to indicate definitively that the patient is an adult—for instance, that the patient's condition arose from some aspect of reproduction or overindulgence in sex or wine—but comparatively few case histories can reliably be identified as those of children. If a patient's own name is not used, a common way to refer to them is by a patronymic. Very few women are referred to by their own name, so a patronymic for a female does not give us any clues as to age. However, as far as male patients are concerned it might seem reasonable to assume that the choice between using a man's given name or his patronymic depends to some extent on the age of the patient. However, a male identified only as the son of Nikolaus died after drinking, which suggests he was past childhood (*Epidemics* VII.92), and another male identified only as the son of Kleisthenes is a wrestling master (*Epidemics* VI.8.30). Conversely, at *Epidemics* V.23, the author recounts the case of Eumelus of Larissa who was aged twelve or thirteen with no reference to any other family member. Without some further context, then, the use or absence of a patronymic to identify a patient tells us nothing about their age.

There is a similar problem with the term *pais* when it is used of an individual. A person could be the child of somebody at any age. The *pais* of Philotimus was an epebe (a young man in military training) when he came to the doctor for treatment (*Epidemics* VII.124). The term is also used of slaves in Greek culture, and it may be used with this meaning in at least some of the case histories. *Epidemics* IV.50 describes the symptoms of a cough among “those who work with their hands.” As an example it cites “the *pais* who tied up the grape vines.” The individual referred to here may be a slave, a child, or both. We cannot assume that when a Hippocratic author uses the term *pais* in a case history he means to imply a member of the demographic *paides*. The term *paidiske*, which is used in several case histories, has an ambiguity similar to *pais*. In *Epidemics* V.28 a *paidiske* is said to be twelve years old, and in the case history of the *paidiske* of Histiaeus in *Epidemics* IV.49 the term is the last word in the history after the recording of her death, which suggests it is meant to indicate her age. On the other hand, in *Epidemics* VII.105 a *meirakion* is described as the son of a *paidiske*, and in *Epidemics* IV.23 the patient is identified simply as “the *paidiske* behind the Heroon.” This suggests a certain independence unsuited to a girl of less than fourteen.

Although the term *paidion* could have similar ambiguity to *pais* and *paidiske* in ordinary Greek usage, whenever the Hippocratics use it there is frequently something in the context to show that a child is under discussion. For example, in *Epidemics* II.3.18 a patient suffering a swelling is referred to simply as the *paidion* of Andronicus. However, the case is immediately associated with a swelling on “another” (presumably another *paidion*) three days after birth (one of the few times we see a Hippocratic make a possible reference to a newborn patient). At *Epidemics* IV.19 the author indicates the sex of a *paidion* by specifying it is male (*arrhen*). This would be a clumsy locution to indicate

the sex of a slave when it is easy to use masculine or feminine modifiers with *pais*. I feel reasonably safe in assuming that when a Hippocratic used the term *paidion* he was referring to a child, not a slave.

The age that follows childhood for a boy is designated as that of either a *meirakion* or a *neaniskos*. Twice in the case histories a *meirakion* is said to be about twenty (Case 8 in the first group of case histories in *Epidemics* III and *Epidemics* IV.15), and in *Epidemics* IV.17 another *meirakion* is described as foreign (*xeinon*) and seems to be traveling by himself, which is unlikely if he was a child. *Fleshes* 13 says that a child becomes a *neaniskos* starting at the age of fourteen, and *Aphorisms* III.29 discusses the ailments of *neaniskoi* immediately after those of puberty. However, when the term is used of an individual patient in the case histories, like *meirakion*, it seems to be used of a male at the upper end of this age range. In *Epidemics* III's second set of case histories, case 16 documents that of a *neaniskos* who was made ill by drunkenness and sex, *Epidemics* V.34 that of a *neaniskos* from Euboea, apparently unaccompanied by his parents, and *Epidemics* V.86 that of a *neaniskos* who drank too much neat wine and bit the head off a snake in surprise when it crawled into his mouth while he was sleeping in a tent, perhaps on ephebic maneuvers. Because the Hippocratics differentiate the *meirakion* and the *neaniskos* from *paidia* and *paides* and also seem to use the terms for individuals at the upper end of the age grouping fourteen to twenty-one, I do not count remarks on either *meirakia* or *neaniskoi* as referring to children.

Similarly for the purposes of this chapter I am not counting *parthenoi* as children, though some of them may have been as young as twelve. The term is used to designate girls whose bodies have begun to menstruate and therefore to change to those of women, a process completed when she gives birth for the first time. So a female of seventeen who had just given birth to her first child is called a woman (*gune*) in the twelfth case history in the group that opens *Epidemics* III, while in *Epidemics* V.50 a *parthenos* is described as being twenty years old. The parallelism between a *neaniskos* and a *parthenos* is confirmed at *Prorrhetic* II.30, which states that certain types of headache appear in *neaniskoi* and *parthenoi*. The issue is not so clear with the term *kore*. *Epidemics* VI.4.4 states that Agasias' wife was said to have had breathing difficulties as a *kore*. The next sentence begins "But having become a woman." This may seem to suggest that *kore* is to *parthenos* as *meirakion* is to *neaniskos*, that is, virtually synonymous. However, the term *parthenos* is far more common in the *CH* than either *meirakion* or *neaniskos* and designates a very clear life stage. If an author wanted to specify this age I think he would have used this vastly more common term. I think then that the term *kore* signifies the upper limit of childhood for a girl, the period just before puberty and the onset of menstruation.

In collective statements, I take the terms *paidia*, *paides*, and *nepioi* (another word for children, generally younger) to identify the age demographic of children. Other terms such as *neoi* and *neoterói* I do not assume to be referring to children unless something in the context warrants it. In individual case histories, the only terms I take to be indicating a child patient without any supporting context are *paidion*, *nepios*, and *kore*. Other child case histories may have been omitted in my survey, but I see no way to identify them.

THE NATURE OF CHILDREN'S BODIES

It is clear that, although sex is much more important than age in considering the diseases and treatment of mature individuals, it is not usually considered significant in discussing child patients. Their bodies are thought to share a paradigm that differs both from older males and older females. Size alone is never mentioned as a criterion of a child's body, and it is likely that many boys approaching puberty were bigger than some women and certainly closer to their size than, say, that of a three-year-old. There is ample evidence that the bodies of children were thought to be warmer and moister than older bodies (e.g., *Regimen* I.33; *Nature of Man* 12; *Aphorisms* I.15); however, these are just general tendencies and some adults could be expected to be at least as warm and moist as some children. If this were the only significant difference of children's bodies their ailments and treatments would simply be those of people with exceptionally warm, moist constitutions, and this is not the case.

It is more significant that before puberty children were not considered "perfected" or "complete." *Epidemics* VI.1.12 calls a two-month-old child a *nepios*; older children are said to be "more complete" (*teleioteroi*). *Joints* 52 discusses cases in which the thigh bone dislocates inward. No reference to age is made in the first part of the chapter, but half-way through the author introduces cases in which the sufferers have not yet perfected their growth. In summarizing the effect of this condition the author says that the greatest damage is done in utero, then to the youngest children (*nepiotatoi*), and least of all to the most complete (*teteleiomanoi*). As we have seen, part of the completion process was the acquisition of all adult teeth, but this could happen at any point between seven and fourteen and did not necessarily coincide with the cessation of growth and the development of the mature adult body that had occurred at puberty.

When growth ceased, or at least slowed down, at puberty the nourishment children took in was no longer needed to build their bodies and thus was converted into the seminal and menstrual fluids that first appear at puberty. Children were completed at puberty in the sense that the passages in the interior of their bodies, both male and female, opened up to be able more efficiently to accommodate these fluids (Dean-Jones 1994: 45–8). There was an increase in glandular flesh in both men and women that could absorb some excess moisture because of its porous nature, but a great many illnesses in adults were caused by excessive moisture flowing to the glands from the rest of the body through the hollow passages (*Glands* 2). The most significant differences in the bodies of children from those of adults were narrower passages and less glandular tissue.

THE DISEASES OF CHILDHOOD

The diseases to which children were considered more prone than adults in the ancient world were not those we might expect. In the famous description of an epidemic of mumps in the first chapter of *Epidemics* I, children are not among those specifically

affected. Instead the disease is said to have affected *meirakia*, *neoi*, and *akmazontes* (usually those who frequented the wrestling schools). It is rare that an illness is described with such particularity that a retrospective diagnosis can be as conclusive as it is in the case of the mumps epidemic, so we should not expect to be able to identify so clearly what we would consider typical childhood illnesses such as measles, German measles, chicken pox, or scarlet fever. But there is very little evidence in the *CH* of any disease that particularly affected children and which manifested primarily in a rash. There is an isolated case in *Epidemics* V.93 where the *pais* of Euphanor (who may not be a child) broke out in a rash like the bites of mosquitoes for a short time with a fever the following day, but it is clearly not an epidemic. And in the common childhood illnesses, fever usually precedes the rash.

The rashes (*exanthemata*) of *lichen*, *leprai*, and *leukai* are discussed in *Prorrhetic* II.43, where they are described as diseases when they occur in children or when any of them is a chronic slow-developing ailment in adults but as *apostases* if they appear suddenly and over a large area in adults. An *apostasis* (literally a setting apart) is the term the Hippocratics use to designate the morbid humors separated from the other bodily fluids, either spontaneously or under the coercion of medicine, which are not immediately eliminated from the body but are sequestered in some way, such as a swelling or an abscess or a rash. If a rash is an *apostasis*, a doctor would not need to treat it because it is itself curing a disease. *Affections* 35 agrees that *leprai* and *lichen* are not diseases and instead lists them among disfigurements (*aeikea*) caused by phlegm. There is no agreed upon retrospective diagnosis of these ailments, except that it is generally accepted that *leprai* is not leprosy. They may have been seen as *apostases* in adults if, as in measles, German measles, chicken pox, and scarlet fever, the rash appeared sometime after the onset of symptoms such as fever and headache. If the patient survived, the *apostasis* would be seen as having begun the resolution of the other symptoms. If the patient died, the *apostasis* would simply be viewed as incomplete. (In this context, perhaps the chronic slow-developing form of the ailment that is said to be a disease rather than an *apostasis* even in adults could be shingles—which is neither self-correcting nor fatal—or an allergic reaction.)

But why would these same ailments, whatever they are, be seen as diseases and not *apostases* in children? Was it because children rarely survived them? *Leprai* and *lichen* are said to be easiest to cure when they occur in the youngest patients, but in the same chapter in which *leukai* is said to be a disease only in the case of children it is described as being “among the most mortal of diseases” (*Prorrhetic* II.43). In unvaccinated communities fatality from measles is much more common among children, especially those who are malnourished and suffer from a lack of vitamin A (WHO, February 2013 Fact Sheet 286). I do not want to identify *leukai* with measles (for one thing the name argues against it). However, the fact that the ailment was seen in some way to be the same for children and adults (hence the use of the same name) but in another way different (fatal disease for the former, *apostasis* for the latter) suggests that there may have been something in the epidemiology of the disease similar to the epidemiology of measles. It may be that most adults had developed a natural immunity to *leukai* due to exposure during

childhood, so when adults broke out in what appeared to be the same sort of rash it was really more often a self-limiting allergic reaction or similar, which the Hippocratics did not distinguish from the more serious exanthemous disease that killed off children before they had chance to get to the stage of developing allergic reactions. It was not seen as an *apostasis* in a child's case because relatively few children survived.

In fact, there is some evidence that Hippocratics would not expect an *apostasis* in any child's illness. *Prorrhetic* II.33 discusses the condition of *nuktalopes*, probably sufferers from night blindness. The passage says the disease affects particularly *paides* and *neaniskoi*. The disease is also said to afflict primarily children at *Epidemics* VI.7.1, and in fact night blindness is a disease that commonly afflicts children in cultures where they are undernourished, particularly when they get insufficient vitamin A (Grmek 1989: 311). In this condition, *Prorrhetic* II.33 goes on to say, *apostases* are beneficial but do not occur often because of the youth (*neoteta*) of the patient. No explanation is given of this statement, but it seems likely it is connected with the compact nature of a child's body. At the end of the fourth century BCE, Theophrastus wrote that although children were hot and humid by nature they did not sweat much because of the density of their bodies (*On Sweat* 19). The corporeal passages are not open enough to facilitate the flowing of moisture through their flesh or therefore the collecting of a morbid humor in one spot. Women and *parthenoi* are said not to be susceptible to night blindness at all. *Parthenoi* would have begun to menstruate, which was frequently seen as serving to purge women and to protect them from many diseases that would require an *apostasis* in the male (Dean-Jones 1994: 110–47). Further evidence that a child's body did not lend itself to *apostases* and that this could cause a problem in vision is found at *Eyesight* 2, which says that a doctor cannot help the vision of younger people (*neoterai*) while they are still growing; he should cauterize their eyelids once they have stopped growing. One function of cauterization was to dry up *apostases*. If a child did not produce *apostases* it would be futile to try to dry them up, and the author has no other remedy to suggest.

The failure of a child's body to form *apostases* may explain the different treatments for dropsy (the swelling of tissues from the accumulation of fluid which can have several causes) in adults and children recommended by one Hippocratic author. *Affections* 22 says that in sufferers from dropsy the lower body swells with fluid while the upper body wastes away. Although dropsy is not said to be more common or more fatal among children than among adults, several artistic representations of a doctor show him examining a young male patient who is depicted as having a swollen abdomen and an emaciated upper body. Dropsy, then, may be one condition in children that Hippocratics did treat. The first line of treatment, according to *Affections*, is a regimen to make the patient lean and dry, presumably by diet and exercise. If that does not work medications can be employed, and finally if all else fails an incision should be made either beside the navel or in the back to draw off the water. *Places in Man* 24 describes the condition of water gathering in the flesh around the organs of the abdomen in language similar to that of the *Affections* passage without using the term dropsy. It also recommends first employing medications, but if these do not work the author suggests "cauteriz[ing] in a circle around the umbilicus, but not right into the umbilicus, as lightly and as superficially

as possible so that it will be able to retain the water, and draw the water off each day.” The following chapter (25) details how to treat a *paidion* suffering from the same ailment: “Open up the parts that are swollen and full of water with your scalpel, opening up lots of small incisions; open them up in every part of the body, and administer vapor-baths, and constantly apply a warming medication to each of the parts that has been opened up.” The fourfold use of the verb “to open up” (*exoignumi*), which appears nowhere else in the *CH* (Craik 1998: 175), reflects the author’s conception of the density of the child’s body. A single incision at the navel would not effectively drain the water from throughout such a body. Many incisions are needed because the fluid is slow to seep through the dense flesh. The warming medication may be used to keep the incisions open rather than to help them to heal. *Fleshes* 9 says skin forms over incisions because of interior and exterior cold, and the doctor may be concerned that the incisions would close over before the water had had time to drain from the child’s flesh.

THE HEAD AS THE ORIGIN OF AILMENTS IN CHILDREN

The one part of a child’s body where denseness was not an issue was the head, and a remarkably large proportion of the exiguous remarks on actual child patients in the *CH* focuses on their heads. As we have seen, before puberty the most significant stages of childhood are marked by first and second dentition. Whereas the bodies of children generally have fewer or narrower passages than those of adults, *Fleshes* 13 says that of all bones only jawbones have vessels in them that allow the growth of teeth in children. It is perhaps these passages that were thought to make small children more susceptible to mouth ulcers. The first ailment *Aphorisms* III.24 lists as affecting newborns is *aph-thai*, generally taken to mean thrush, the white patches that can appear in the mouths of babies (though at *Nature of Women* 100 it is used in the singular to refer to an ailment of the newborn’s genitals). Other than these two occurrences the ailment is specific to pregnant women. More serious “flesh-eating” ulcers (*phagedainai*) afflict two *paidia* in *Epidemics* IV.19, and the teeth and jaw of the *pais* of Metrodorus are said to have rotted away in *Epidemics* V.100 (although other than the ailment itself there is nothing indicating that this is not a slave).

Not only do children have passages in their heads, but they also quite clearly have glandular tissue in the shape of their tonsils. Tonsillitis (*paristhmia*) is at the head of the list of diseases in *Aphorisms* III.26 that particularly affect children after they have finished teething. Ulceration of the tonsils is also the focus of the second half of the treatise *Dentition*. Although the author does not state that this affliction is specific to children, he refers to *paidia* in *Dentition* 22 and 26 and that he considers it an ailment to which children are particularly prone is made clear by the nature of *Dentition* itself. The first half of the treatise is concerned with the appetite and evacuation habits of

suckling and teething children and how these affect their becoming well-nourished or otherwise. It is easier to explain the shift to a focus on the tonsils in the second part of the treatise by a progression based on the age of the subject of the treatise than by a shift to oral ailments generally. In our own society, tonsillitis is very common in children but comparatively rare in adults. *Diseases* II.30 recommends tearing away the tonsils with the finger or removing the tubercles with a knife. Although this author does not describe tonsillitis as a children's disease, the remarks of his contemporaries and our own society's experience of the illness suggest it would be primarily children who underwent this surgery.

Aphorisms III.26 says that at the same age as they become susceptible to tonsillitis children also become susceptible to *choirades*. *Glands* 7 makes it clear that this is a swelling of the glands of the throat and the condition is usually translated as "scrofula." Again, this does not mean that every reference to *choirades* in ancient medical literature can be identified with the tuberculous bacterial infection now known as scrofula, but *choirades* can be assumed to encompass scrofula. Modern epidemiology recognizes two bacterial pathogens for scrofula, a largely asymptomatic one seen almost exclusively in adults and a more common one that can cause ulcers and is seen almost exclusively in those aged two to fifteen. *Prorrhetic* II.11 says that it is mostly *paidia* that develop pustular and scrofulous tubercles, and they get rid of them easily. The tubercles arise less frequently but are harder to get rid of in older children and *neaniskoi* and are not likely to occur in adults. (*Coan Prognoses* 502 says *choirades* does not occur at all between the ages of forty-two and sixty-three.)

PHLEGM AS THE SOURCE OF AILMENTS AND THE SACRED DISEASE IN CHILDREN

Many authors say that tonsillitis and *choirades* are caused by phlegm descending from the head (e.g., *Affections* 35; *Diseases* II.11; *Glands* 7; *Fleshes* 16). Phlegm is also said to be a common cause of many of the other diseases to which children were prone, such as dysentery (*Airs, Waters, Places* 3), tenesmus (the constant desire to defecate even when the bowels are empty; *Epidemics* III.14), and dropsy (*Affections* 22). Evidence suggests that children in ancient Greece, as in our own society, tended to contract upper respiratory infections easily.²

Sacred Disease 8 suggests that it was considered beneficial if children discharged a great deal of mucus. The author explains that the brain should be purged of its excess

² For example, in Plato's *Republic* 343a Thrasyarchus chooses to characterize what he considers the infantile nature of Socrates' arguments by saying he is like a child who is running round with a snotty nose that his nurse should wipe.

of phlegm while the child is still in the womb, but if this does not happen the child will break out in sores on its head, ears, and skin and will have an abundance of saliva and mucus. Children are safeguarded from the Sacred Disease by this discharge and as they grow older enjoy very good health. However, children that are “clean” (*kathara*; i.e., not liable to discharge phlegm), if they are not among those who were purged while in the womb, are at risk of the Sacred Disease. The Sacred Disease is usually conveniently translated as “epilepsy.” However, the terms are not completely congruent, and the ancient term covers a variety of conditions involving seizures (e.g., stroke) that we would differentiate from epilepsy.

The Sacred Disease does not affect adults, even phlegmatic adults, as much as children. *Airs, Waters, Places* 3 lists the endemic diseases of a city in which the inhabitants are moist and full of phlegm. Women are subject to fluxes, many of them are barren, and miscarriages are frequent. Men suffer from dysentery, diarrhea, ague, chronic fevers in winter, eczema, and hemorrhoids. When they pass fifty years of age they are paralyzed by catarrhs from the brain whenever the sun suddenly strikes their head or when they are chilled. *Paidia* are afflicted by seizures (*spasmoi*) and asthma and (in the received text) by “the things which they think cause the childhood disease and <also think> is a sacred disease.” The expression here is very confusing. The relative pronoun introduces a third term in a medical list of endemic diseases that affect children. Up to this point the author does not seem to be reporting the opinion of anyone but himself but here he seems to be introducing the belief of some unidentified plural subjects. Whoever the subjects of “think” are, they cannot think both that some natural observable phenomenon causes the disease and that the disease is sacred.³ The problem is easily resolved by moving “think” so that it governs only the second part of the relative clause and reading, “<children suffer from> the things which cause the childhood disease and which they think is a sacred disease,” where the first part of the statement reports the author’s opinion and the subjects of the second part are the lay inhabitants of a town that suffers this affliction. “The things which cause the childhood disease” would then seem to be fluxes of phlegm.⁴

In the theories of *Airs, Waters, Places* and *Sacred Disease*, the Sacred Disease threatens phlegmatics because phlegm can liquefy under the effects of heat or winds and flow into the passages of the body, blocking the flow of pneuma and blood and causing loss of consciousness and convulsions (*spasmoi*). *Sacred Disease* 11 explicitly discusses the effects of the disease on small children, and these effects seem more permanent than the convulsive or absence seizures associated with classic epilepsy syndrome. According to *Sacred Disease* small children who are attacked by the disease usually

³ It is true that the author states more than once that *he* thinks all diseases are equally divine and equally natural, but he states it as an argument that he has developed, and he is unlikely to characterize the position as a commonplace of unnamed third parties at the beginning of his work.

⁴ As we have seen, epilepsy is attributed to excess phlegm flowing down from the brain in *Sacred Disease*, a treatise that everybody agrees is very closely connected to *Airs, Waters, Places*, if not written by the same author.

die because their narrow veins cannot admit the phlegm and it congeals the blood. A child can survive a slight flow descending on one or both sides, but it usually results in a distortion of that part of the body. This can be beneficial if the passages in the rest of the body are reduced in sympathy because the passages are then too narrow to admit any further flow. The conditions other than epilepsy that could be covered by this description (e.g., cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, polio) are too numerous to count. What is significant is that they are perceived as one affliction by the Hippocratics and all attributed to a downflow of phlegm from the brain blocking the narrow passages of a child's body. The description more clearly fits epilepsy when the author discusses the disease in older children in Chapter 13. There children are said to suffer not only when the head has been heated then suddenly chilled but also if they are frightened or unable to recover their breath while weeping. Chapter 15 recognizes that epileptics can sometimes be aware that an attack is imminent. It says young children (*paidaria*) at first fall down wherever they happen to be but later run to their mothers when they feel an attack approaching.

Sacred Disease refers to the condition throughout the treatise as "the Sacred Disease." Chapter 13 is the only chapter in the treatise that uses the term epilepsy. The Sacred Disease is also the term used by *Airs, Waters, Places* 3, *Prorrhetic* II.9, and *Breaths* 14. This could suggest that epilepsy designates a symptom, a seizure, or convulsion rather than the condition itself (Temkin 1971: 22). However, epilepsy is differentiated from a convulsion or *spasmos* at *Epidemics* VII.106, where a two-month old *paidion* dies after both *spasmoi* and epilepsy, and *Aphorisms* II.45, III.29, and V.7 seem to use epilepsy to refer to a condition rather than a symptom of another disease. It seems possible, then, that the term "epilepsy" designated a narrower range of ailments than the term "Sacred Disease" and is closer to our concept of the syndrome of epilepsy, while the latter term functions to designate what to us is a wider range of conditions involving loss of consciousness or muscle control.

As with many diseases, the Hippocratics believed that puberty could bring relief to epileptics. *Aphorisms* II.45 says that among young (*neoi*) epileptics a cure is brought about by change, especially change of time of life (*helikie*). And *Aphorisms* V.7 says that epilepsy that starts before puberty can be cured but that if it occurs after age twenty-five it generally lasts till death. *Sacred Disease* 13 says that the disease does not occur, or occurs rarely, after twenty unless it has been present from childhood, and Chapter 14 says that recovery is difficult if the disease has grown and been nourished in someone since their childhood. *Prorrhetic* II.9 agrees that those who have the greatest difficulty recovering from the Sacred Disease are those in whom it has been present from childhood and has matured along with them and next those in whom the disease occurs as their body reaches the fullness of age (*akmazonti toi somati tes helikies*), which is from twenty-five to forty-five. The language of *Sacred Disease* and *Prorrhetic* II indicates that when they describe the disease as difficult to cure in those who have had it since childhood they are referring to those for whom puberty brought no relief, not to all those who suffer the disease as children.

Although the Hippocratics recognize that epilepsy is not restricted to children, there is some reason it might be called “the children’s disease” and associated primarily with children. The vast majority of people who suffer from epilepsy today have their first seizure as children or adolescents, more than 50% before the age of ten. Sometimes the condition completely disappears as they grow older, and in many cases the symptoms can grow less severe and less frequent.

SPASMOI IN CHILDREN

One of the symptoms associated with epilepsy, *spasmoi*, was seen as a very frequent hazard of childhood. *Aphorisms* III.25 says that when teething begins a child becomes susceptible not only to painful gums, fevers, and diarrhea but also to *spasmoi*. In the first half of *Dentition* the one complaint of which the author seems particularly afraid for nursing and teething children is *spasmoi*. For example, Chapter 6 says that children whose bowels move often during teething are less likely to have *spasmoi* than those who have few bowel movements. In *Epidemics* I.6 there is a description of quotidian fever in a particularly wet and cold year. The author comments that many patients, especially children, suffered from *spasmoi* and slight feverishness from the beginning. *Epidemics* I.12 describes the different symptoms of certain cases of ardent fevers that afflict the general population and then describes the specific symptoms of children, women, and older people. Children suffer chiefly from *spasmoi*. In a discussion of fevers, *Prognosis* 24 says that children younger than seven years suffer from *spasmoi* but that these do not attack older children and adults unless the more violent symptoms supervene. *Regimen in Health* is a treatise on the regimen to be followed in health. Its only suggestion for children is in Chapter 6, which dictates that *paidia* and *nepioi* should be washed in warm water for a long time and be given well-diluted wine to drink so that the body will swell less and they will be less prone to *spasmoi*. *Spasmoi* were viewed very seriously, in older patients particularly. *Coan Prognoses* 350 says that a *spasmos* following a fever is mortal, though least so in children, and *Coan Prognoses* 351 says that for people older than seven a *spasmos* is fatal. It is estimated today that one in thirty children will have a convulsion associated simply with a high fever at one time or another, usually between the ages of six months and six years (Royal Children’s Hospital of Melbourne, “Febrile Convulsion,” April 2011). This is a far higher incidence than among the adult population and does not in and of itself raise the concern of health-care workers or signal a propensity for epilepsy of any type. Convulsions among adults are generally less common and often have more sinister causes. Among the Hippocratics, the association of *spasmoi* with the Sacred Disease suggests that even when *spasmoi* were not seen as part of full-blown epilepsy they were still frequently thought to be caused by excess phlegm, like the Sacred Disease itself, and tonsillitis, scrofula, teething problems, dysentery and *leprai*. The source of the phlegm, and of all these illnesses, is the child’s head.

HEAD INJURIES IN CHILDREN

Not only are children's heads the source of many of their diseases, but they are also susceptible to trauma. *Head Wounds* is a treatise detailing the treatment that should be afforded those who suffer a wound to the head. *Head Wounds* 18 is devoted to children. It says that the skulls of *paidia* are thin and soft, like the bregma (the part of the skull where the sagittal suture meets the coronal, the weakest part of the skull in adults). This would mean that they fracture more readily, wounds are more mortal, and medical treatment is more difficult than on adult skulls generally. However, they suppurate more readily and for shorter periods, which would lessen the dangers of inflammation, one of the major sources of death from head wounds for adults. If the blow to the head results in an injury that leaves a hole in the bone through which fluids can escape, the author recommends leaving it alone, but if there is contusion, fracture, or a *hedra* (the mark of a weapon left on bone distinct from contusion, fracture, or depression of the bone) accompanied by contusion or fracture, the doctor is told to trephine, that is, cut a hole in the bone himself. Trephination is acknowledged to be a very risky procedure in the case of adults, but if the injury requires it and it is not performed then death is the inevitable result. If a fracture is not immediately apparent in adults but the doctor suspects it from the patient's account, he can make it visible by plastering a black substance over the bone and then scraping it away. If a fracture is present the substance will seep in and reveal it. This procedure is apparently not available in the case of children; the doctor has to "use his intelligence" to tell if a child's skull has a concealed fracture because in the case of a child a fracture "cannot be seen with the eyes" (*Head Wounds* 18). This may be due to the softness of the child's skull; scraping it may be too risky. If trephining is indicated, the doctor is to take even greater care than with an adult; he is to use a small instrument, keep a sharp lookout, and check the incision at short intervals because of the thinness of the skull.

The upshot of all this is that although trephining children's head wounds should be more difficult and more dangerous than operating on adults, if the operation was performed successfully there would be a greater chance of survival because of the tendency of children's bones to suppurate readily and dry quickly. The doctor would also have to decide often without patient input or the scraping test whether trephining was needed, but to fail to do it if it was needed condemned the patient to death. On balance it seems as if we might expect a doctor to trephine children just as often as adults.

In fact, the case histories suggest they were trephined far more frequently. Of the six cases of actual trephining recorded in *Epidemics*, only one (V.27) is not clearly a child. In two of the remaining five trephination cases, the author gives the age of the patient. In *Epidemics* V.28 a twelve-year-old girl was hit on the head with a door. Her skull was shattered, which would mean that normally trephination was not called for; in this case she was trephined because the wound was over the sutures, but she died anyway. The author explains that this was because she was not trephined sufficiently. A rare case of a successful trephination was performed in *Epidemics* V.16 on the eleven-year-old groom

(or perhaps a son named Hippocomus) of Palamedes, who was struck on the forehead by a horse and trephined almost completely through the skull. He developed erysipelas (cellulitis) and had to be purged (as was advised in such cases in *Head Wounds* 20), but the author insists that the wound was not responsible for his problems.

Epidemics VII.35 records the cases of seven head injuries, of which the second and third were trephined. The first five cases are all referred to as *paidia*, and shrill crying (*klangode*) is associated with all five, which suggests we are dealing with young children. The remaining two cases could also be children. The sixth case is identified simply as Poseidocreon with no indication of age (though he does suffer *spasmoi*), and the final case is identified by patronymic as Isagoras' son.

The final case of trephination is recorded at *Epidemics* IV.11. This is the case of a *pais* who was hit on the head with a potsherd by another *pais*. Admittedly these could be adult slaves, but a potsherd is more likely to do serious damage to a child's skull than to an adult's, and throwing potsherds at one another also seems to be more the action of children than grown men. The *pais* became feverish after twelve days because the woman who originally washed the wound had rubbed him too hard and he took a chill. He was thereupon trephined immediately but died twelve days later.

There are not many cases here, but significantly in almost all cases of recorded head injury, whether or not the patient was trephined, the author is at pains to indicate that the patient was a child and on two occasions even recording the age in years, which is very unusual. In fact, it is *only* in these two cases and a third involving a head injury that the ages of child patients are recorded in *Epidemics*. It would therefore seem reasonable to speculate that the age of the child had some value in explaining the course of the cranial injury in general and in justifying the use of the trephine in particular.

Children may have been expected to succumb to head injuries more readily than adults not only because their skulls were more fragile but also because their heads contained more phlegm, which could be agitated and flow down into their bodies causing a blockage and loss of consciousness. The threat of this in turn could justify the dangerous measure of trephination. Because the head of a child contained passages, it was one place where Hippocratic surgical therapeutic methods could be employed effectively on a child's body, so doctors may have been more willing to accept child patients when they could focus on their crania.

The Hippocratic model of a child's head as full of passages susceptible to blockage by phlegm may also account for the strange case of Eumelus recorded in *Epidemics* V.23. When he was twelve or thirteen he spent twenty days paralyzed in all his limbs, eating nothing but barley cakes and honey water. He recovered after falling backward from a sitting position and striking his head on a stone. The age of the patient is given at the end of the case rather than at the beginning as in the other two case histories that give a child's age, and rather than simply stating the age the author writes, "He was *at that time (ede)* twelve or thirteen." This, plus the fact that the patient is referred to by his own name, could suggest that the author got the story through hearsay several years after the supposed incident. He may have been disposed to accept it as true because he could believe that the knock on the head dislodged the blockage causing Eumelus' paralysis.

CONCLUSION

The Hippocratic doctors' first line of attack against disease was to make the patient's diet more liquid and bland. It is likely that they took this approach with children too, but a child's diet would probably have been already blander than an adult's and therefore would have given a doctor less scope for modification. *Aphorisms* IV.1 remarks that care has to be taken in medicating children, and this would most certainly have been the case with the doctor's most powerful *pharmakon*, hellebore, which would be very dangerous to administer even to full-grown adults. If the third form of therapy in the Hippocratic arsenal, cupping and cautery, was also seen as less likely to be effective on a child than an adult because a child's body did not produce *apostases*, many Hippocratics may have felt stymied in their treatment of children and, true to the injunction at *Epidemics* I.11, "help, or do not harm," deliberately refrained from practicing their *techne* (craft) on children. The major exceptions to this would seem to be cases of dropsy, where the diffusion of the swelling allowed multiple points of drainage, and cases of tonsillitis and head wounds, where the presence of glandular tissue and open passages allowed the Hippocratic to apply his surgical skills. These procedures would have caused great pain to the child patient and perhaps even greater anguish to the parents. Since parents were willing to entrust their children to Hippocratic doctors for these dramatic procedures, we can assume there was no generalized distrust of their knowledge or competence, and we might expect the Hippocratics to have positioned themselves in the medical marketplace to offer gentler alternatives for less critical conditions. That they did not stems as much or more from their recognition that their *techne* had limits as from a father's complaisance about his control over his children.

A NOTE ON THE HIPPOCRATIC CORPUS

The *CH* is a compilation of medical treatises from the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. Although the treatises are written by different authors, they share a certain commonality of approach to illness and therapy. They believe illnesses are caused by a disruption in the balance of bodily fluids (though there is no agreement on what these fluids are) and that health is restored when the body brings itself back into balance by "concocting" (a form of heating) the fluids, replenishing depletions, and evacuating excesses. Doctors can aid in this by imposing a regimen of diet and exercise, administering drugs, or performing surgery, though again doctors could disagree on what needed to be done for any given patient.

The best editions of the *CH* are generally those of the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, but there are relatively few treatises available in this series as yet. Both Budé and Loeb have published most of the *CH* and intend to finish the series within the next few years. Scholars are also producing editions of and commentaries on individual treatises more frequently. A convenient list of the modern editions of the treatises of the *CH* is available in Holmes (2010: xvi–xxii).

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CHAPTER 6

RAISING A DISABLED CHILD

CHRISTIAN LAES

INTRODUCTION

How did families in antiquity react when they were confronted with the birth of a disabled child? Did they develop an etiology to explain the fact and to cope with the emotionally difficult situation? Did such babies survive and, if so, how did they spend their first years? Was there any chance they would go to school or be integrated into the labor force? And did at least some of them expect that they would one day stand on their own feet, get married, and have a family of their own?

These seem very straightforward questions to which one might expect direct answers. However, the task of tackling these issues is studded with methodological difficulties. First, disabled people were not at all a focus of interest for ancient authors. At best, they mention them in anecdotes or asides. Second, it is not easy at all to diagnose disabilities just by reading ancient (medical) texts: the problem of “retrospective” diagnosis is a serious one, made even more difficult by the very different terminology and concepts applied by ancient physicians (Graumann 2000, 2008, 2012). Moreover, a word for, or a clear concept of, “handicap” and “disability” did not exist in antiquity.¹ Such categories are culturally determined: ancient philosophers, for instance, associated all babies with deformity, ugliness, and mental incapacity (Arist. *GA* 779a24; ps.-Arist. *Col.* 797b24–30; see Dasen 2008: 50–1; Kelley 2009: 200).

None of these difficulties is insurmountable. Ancient historians have learned to refer to other relevant research tools and material such as demography, comparative anthropology, osteology and medicine, juristic texts, and artifacts. Neither does the lack of a clearly defined concept of handicap or disability exclude the study of a phenomenon.

¹ The word “handicap”, originally referring to a disadvantage deliberately imposed on a stronger horse to have a more equal race competition, was introduced after the First World War, a period in which alterity and rehabilitation were much emphasized. See Hubert 2000; Gazzaniga 2004: 642–3.

Even nowadays, the World Health Organization acknowledges that the concept of disabilities is, in part, culturally determined and considers the word handicap an umbrella term. In fact, our definitions of disability and deformity have become so broad and vague (cf. the so-called social or psychological handicaps) that, according to some statistics, one in six people in the United States is considered to suffer from disability.² This does not mean that similarities cannot be discovered across time and place. Obviously, Greek and Latin had words for blindness, deafness, and perceived physical or mental anomalies.³ In the same way, the study of homosexuality, or of sexuality in general, has proven to be a fruitful branch of ancient history, although the ancients lacked proper terminology to denote both.

DEMOGRAPHY, MEDICINE, AND THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

Online research tools have enabled nonspecialists to access knowledge about birth defects and have provided them with detailed lists of all possible defects, their symptoms, frequency in various parts of the world, and the chances of survival.⁴ Due to the *permanence biologique* connecting people from antiquity to people today, the same symptoms and defects that exist today already existed in the ancient world, though their frequency may have been different due to obvious factors such as a difference in climate, diet, air, and habitation. In the case of blindness, it has been demonstrated that less than 1% of blind adults belong to the category of the congenitally blind. According to the World Health Organization, the percentage is only slightly higher in the developing world. So we may safely assume that the rate of congenitally blind children was not much higher in antiquity. In contrast, the incidence of adventitious blindness, even in the case of children, must have been greater, since there have been significant medical advances in treating diseases such as infectious trachoma (commonly spread by flies) or river blindness; better nutritional habits nowadays can also prevent, for example, xerophthalmia, which results from a lack of vitamin A in the diet. The same is true for mobility impairment due to accidents and injuries, which must have been much higher

² On the thorny problem of terminology and definitions both in antiquity and nowadays, see Garland 1995: 6–7; Cuny-Le Callet 2005: 1–30; Laes 2008: 89–90. See Garland (ibid.) for U.S. statistics.

³ For useful glossaries or discussions on ancient terminology and classification, see Garland 1995: 183–5; Bien 1997: 27–37; Cuny-Le Callet 2005: 43–93; Laes 2008: 89–91.

⁴ Useful online tools include The European Surveillance of Congenital Anomalies (EUROCAT): <http://www.eurocat.ulster.ac.uk>; FAO Database on the Rural Disabled: <http://www.fao.org/sd/Ppdirect/rurald/>; Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man (OMIM): <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=omim>; all accessed April 17, 2012; and World Atlas of Birth Defects: <http://www.who.int/genomics/publications/reports/en/>; accessed June 14, 2013.

in antiquity compared with developed countries nowadays, where medical aid is more readily available (Just 1997: 25).

Different demographic or nutritional regimes may indeed have had an impact on the frequency of impairment. In contemporary Europe, with mothers becoming pregnant at a relatively later age, the occurrence of Down's syndrome is about one in six hundred live births, much higher than the risk in ancient societies where mothers gave birth at an earlier age. This may be the reason that people suffering from the syndrome seem absent in the literary sources and are strongly underrepresented in osteological finds from antiquity, though increased mortality in childhood due to the risk, for instance, of heart failure, may also be a reason for this (Roberts and Manchester 1995: 62). Hellenistic and Roman Egypt had a peculiar marriage pattern of brother-sister unions, undoubtedly causing the birth of a considerable number of impaired children, more than in the rest of the Roman Empire. Early natural death combined with exposure and infanticide may have been means by which Egyptians coped with this particular demographic reality.⁵ In the Roman Mediterranean, osteological evidence from infants younger than six months has revealed more *cribra orbitalia*, porous lesions of the roofs of the orbits, due to a diet based on or supplemented with goat's milk (Bourbou and Garvie-Lok 2009: 75).

ANCIENT ETIOLOGY: BETWEEN EXPLANATION, REASSURANCE, AND BLAME

In antiquity, when a child was born visibly disabled or in bad health (the differentiation between disability and illness was inevitably blurred), a whole set of causes could be proposed to explain what at first sight appeared inexplicable to the mind (Bien 1997; Hummel 1999; Metzler 2006: 71–98). Most likely, the diagnoses offered by physicians were different from those of the “common people,” but an interaction between both groups can be presumed, educated doctors being at least aware of popular knowledge or influenced by it, and instilling some of their scientific knowledge about causes of illness into the general public's perception.

According to Galen, physical deformity could arise from lack of space for the developing fetus in the mother's uterus. Humoral theory was adduced to explain paralysis as a destruction of the body due to too much cold. Ancient doctors were aware of inheritance factors and congenital impairment. Already Aristotle had observed that blind parents sometimes generate blind offspring. There are also some explicit references to

⁵ Remijse and Clarysse 2009 on brother-sister marriage in Greco-Roman Egypt; Scheidel 1996 on the biology of such unions. Scheidel 1996: 20 mentions about 50% of babies dying early or suffering from more or less severe handicaps; see also Scheidel 1996: 27 about societies with 84% infanticide still managing to maintain a stable population.

lame persons having lame offspring. To explain how birth defects could occur in the progeny of physically healthy parents, Hippocratic theory referred to deficiency of the womb, constriction of the fetus by the womb, or weak sperm coming from weaker parts of the body.⁶ Numerological theories also had a role to play. According to ancient thought, children born at eight months were prone to die and constituted a potential danger to the mother, while seven-month-old infants could survive (see the chapters by Dasen and Liston and Rotroff in this volume). On rare occasions, the mother's early age of childbearing is cited as a cause for having a disabled child.⁷ Maternal imagination also had an impact on whether the child was congenitally impaired or not. According to Soranus, some mothers who had seen monkeys during intercourse had borne children resembling monkeys. For this reason, the tyrant of Cyprus forced his wife to look at beautiful statues during intercourse: thus, he assured himself of beautiful offspring. Even in 1876, a Göttingen physician dissuaded pregnant women from watching cripples or other unfortunates of repulsive appearance. In much the same way, Soranus advised women to be sober during intercourse, as drunkenness amplified fantasies in the mind, which in turn could cause children to be deformed.⁸ Parents who had not observed the laws of intercourse were held responsible for their children's defects. This line of thinking is particularly developed in late antiquity, when Christian authors accused couples of "not observing the right moment," that is, of having sex during menstruation, pregnancy, or the lactation period—fortuitously, not the periods in which intercourse does usually lead to pregnancy. According to some Church Fathers, sex on Sundays or Holy Days could result in an infant being congenitally disabled.⁹

It is difficult to say whether these theories actually affected people's minds and made them feel guilty when a disabled baby was born. Were mothers more likely to be blamed than fathers? A touching story in Gregory of Tours' *Vita Martini* mentions a mother in Bourges who was criticized and laughed at for giving birth to a monster. In tears, she confessed that she had conceived the child on a Sunday night. There is no mention of the father, though he was obviously to blame for the same reason. Physiological explanations also tend to stress the mother's responsibility, though not exclusively. Occasionally, male

⁶ Gal. *De caus. morb.* 7 (7.26–27 Kühn) (lack of space in uterus); Isid. *Et.* 4.7.25 (paralysis for humoral reasons); Arist. *HA* 585b–586a (physically impaired children are born of physically impaired parents, for example the lame); Plin. *Nat.* 7.50 and Hipp. *Morb. Sacr.* 2 (6.364–366 Littré) (hereditary lameness); Hipp. *Genit.* 9–13 (7.482–493 Littré) (deficiency of the womb or weak sperm).

⁷ On the potential dangers of childbirth at eight months: Plin. *Nat.* 7.4. See Hanson 1987. Ruf. in Orib. *inc.* 2.1–7 (4.76 ed. Raeder) on weak babies when mothers are too young.

⁸ Sor. *Gyn.* 1.39.1 (monkeys and Cypriot tyrant); Sor. *Gyn.* 1.39.2 (drunkenness). Stories of "impregnation by watching images" occur quite often in ancient literature, for example, Gal. *De theriaca ad Pisonem* 11 (14.254 Kühn); Cael. *Aur. Gyn.* 1.50. See Maire (2004) for a collection of evidence, including the Göttingen physician.

⁹ Metzler 2006: 86–9. See Jerome *In Ezechiel* 6.18 (*PL* 25.173); Rufinus *Recognitiones* 9.9 (menstruation, pregnancy, or lactation period). Sophronius *Thaumata* 15.3 mentions elephantiasis as a punishment for having sex before menstrual purification (cited in Gasco 2005: 267). See Greg. Tur. *Vita Martini* 2.24; Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 44.7 on sex on Sundays.

writers seem to be aware of the difficulties women met, not least because their husbands blamed them for what went wrong during pregnancy.¹⁰ Moreover, one should keep in mind that increased medical knowledge nowadays has significantly increased women's awareness of responsibility as well as possible feelings of guilt when things go wrong. Most mothers today know they should abstain from nonpasteurized cheese, raw meat, and smoking.

Ancient physicians were also aware of postnatal deformations. Club feet were attributed to incorrect swaddling, causing children's soft and wax-like bones to become misshapen through bad posture. Making an infant stand or walk too early for too long could also cause malformation (Gal. *In Hipp. Artic. comment.* 4.4 [18.1.670–671 Kühn], clubfeet; Gal. *De caus. morb.* 7 [7.27 Kühn], standing or walking). Even hydrocephalus was explained as a disorder brought about during birth, when the midwife touched the head clumsily and squeezed parts of the head (Leonides in Aetius. 6.1; Orib. *Coll. med.* 46.28.1; Paul. Aeg. *Epit.* 6.3.1). Bad food or environmental influences were also held to be responsible for postnatal disability.¹¹ Undoubtedly, such observations had severe implications for midwives or nurses. In the case of babies of the more well-off, these vulnerable social outsiders could be blamed and used as an excuse for a child's bad condition.

THE FIRST DAYS AFTER BIRTH: SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST OR THE WEAKEST?

While modern statistics on congenital disabilities allow us to estimate the numbers of babies in the ancient world who would have had no chance of survival whatsoever, the number of disabled infants who were disposed of by human interference, infanticide, or exposure is simply beyond any statistical knowledge. The scholarly discussion on elimination of malformed newborns is based on merely a handful of text fragments. For Greece, these fragments are thoughts concerning the ideal state, or utopian projections on a long distance past. For Rome, the philosopher Seneca the Younger quite unambiguously refers to the reality of selection: "Unnatural prodigy we destroy; we drown even children who at birth are weakly and abnormal. Yet it is not anger, but reason that separates the harmful from the sound" (*De ira* 1.15.2; trans. Bassore in Loeb edition). Reports and lists of ominous births, mostly in Livy and Julius Obsequens, hold that most of these *prodigia* or monsters were killed immediately after birth.¹²

¹⁰ John Chrysost. *Hom.* 1.5 (PG 54.639) on sterility; Aet. 16.26 stating that unions out of love are the most fruitful.

¹¹ Hummel 1999: 112–9 on the quality of milk and first food. See Gal. *De alim. facult.* 3.15 (6.686 Kühn); Aet. 4.7 on pathological consequences of a bad mother's or nurse's milk.

¹² Ideal state theories: Plato *Rep.* 460c; Arist. *Pol.* 7.1335b. On utopian projection about Sparta: Plut. *Lyc.* 16 (and see the chapters by Patterson and Kennell in this volume). On these fragments, which have been commented upon again and again, see Laes 2008: 92–5; cf. Evans Grubbs in this volume. Lists of *prodigia* in Allély 2003, 2004.

The decision about whether or not a child would be given the chance to survive was obviously not exclusively a medical one. Male doctors were rarely present during childbirth; rather, limited medical opportunities would surely have reduced their interest in the matter ([Ps.-]Gal. *An animal* 2.4–5 [19.163 Kühn]). Nor were the birth and possible elimination of a disabled child matters of legal interest. Roman legal sources tried to distinguish between illness and disability, but they never came to an established and accepted definition. Lawyers took interest in the matter only where the *ius trium liberorum* was concerned: the final decision on life or death was an entirely private matter.¹³ Moreover, the moral concept of the right to life of a newborn was unknown to the non-Christian Greeks and Romans. Children were perhaps not considered full human beings before the name-giving day or *dies lustricus*, the eighth or the ninth day for girls or boys. Children were thus born twice: once biologically and once socially (Corbier 2001: 58–60).

With no lawyers or state involvement, no doctors to decide, and no public opinion disapproving of the disposal of a (weak) newborn in times of massive infant mortality, the ultimate decision as to the fate of disabled babies was left to the persons who were immediately present at birth. Throughout antiquity, the ancient medical tradition clearly refers to the selection of newborns. Hippocrates considered gynecology the art of finding out which newborns were worth rearing. Soranus himself describes how the midwife should inspect the newborn; only after this inspection is the child to be raised. The baby who failed to meet these requirements was “not worth the rearing,” though Soranus does not explicitly state what action should be taken (Hipp. *Oct.* 10; Sor. *Gyn.* 2.10; Mustio *Gyn.* 1.76). Unmentioned measures may have included drowning or suffocating the infant, simply putting aside the newborn or denying nourishment, or exposing it in a public place (*Dig.* 25.3.4 [Paulus]; see also Evans Grubbs in this volume). From a human point of view, decision-making was difficult, and we do not need to wonder that such decisions were covered in silence and scarcely ever mentioned. Often it would be women—the mother and the midwife—who made their decision as circumstances dictated.

At the same time, this does not mean that there was not a “survival of the weakest” and that at least some disabled, whether congenitally or with injuries or impairments acquired in childhood, survived into adulthood. Numerous ancient artifacts testify to the presence of impaired people in ancient society. Osteological evidence also supports this conclusion (ancient art: Grmek and Gourevitch 1998; osteology: Scott 2000). Above all, literary evidence, although patchy, occasionally offers a glimpse into the daily existence of the (young) disabled and their families, as we shall see. We can, however, use historical empathy to speculate on what made parents decide to keep their child. Economical motives combined with gender issues might have played a role. Perhaps

¹³ See Gourevitch 1998 and Allély 2004: 90–5 on legal matters. According to *Dig.* 50.16.135 (Ulpian) a disabled child (*portentosus*, *monstruosus*, or *debilis*) should be taken into account for the *ius trium liberorum*. According to *Pauli Sent.* 4.9.3 and *Dig.* 1.5.14 (Paulus) this could be the case only when the child had a human appearance. On the *ius trium liberorum*, see McGinn in this volume.

parents did not want to lose their sole heir. Aristotle tellingly states that more males than females are born deformed: we are left with the possibility that he came to this conclusion by observing *surviving* babies. The very different ecological regime of the ancient world may have instilled attitudes in parents that were quite different from modern expectations. Since there was no sophisticated medical testing, there were far fewer somatic ideals and different aesthetical standards, not to mention other concepts of normality.¹⁴

EARLY CHILDHOOD YEARS

Scholarly debates on infanticide or exposure of the impaired have often neglected the fact that quite a few congenital handicaps are not apparent immediately after birth. It takes some time, even today, before parents find out that their child is actually blind. The same goes for deafness and muteness (or deaf-muteness) as well as for most mental disabilities. Saint Augustine has a beautiful observation on the latter. Fathers take delight when they hear their little children chattering baby talk. However, when a father knows that his son is mentally retarded and is never going to be beyond this stage, he mourns him more than if he were dead. This statement should not be taken as an actual death wish (Augustine *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum* 1.35.66 in *PL* 44.148). Comparative anthropology teaches us that when the disability is discovered somewhat later in life, parents very rarely resort to the option of *Pädizid* (killing of a child) to be differentiated from *Infantizid* (Krausse 1998: 328). Once a child has been accepted in the family for some time, emotional bonds are formed, making the disposal of the infant rather unlikely. However, even in the case of healthy children, exceptions to this rule are attested. Again, we should not wonder that such decisions were unlikely to be mentioned and thus were veiled in silence. Although the future Emperor Claudius initially accepted the infant Claudia whom his wife, Urgulanilla, had with the freedman Boter, he later exposed the child naked, before her mother's door; mention here of her nakedness could refer to his intention to have her die (Suet. *Claud.* 27; cf. Evans Grubbs in this volume).

But how would families have reacted when they found out that there was actually something wrong with their baby? Here, the story of Claudius himself is worth considering. Nowadays some physicians suppose that he suffered from Little's disease, caused by cerebral lesions at birth, which would have made him appear normal when he was born but afterward would cause motor defects, clinical spasticity and muscle weakness, slowness in speech, and the appearance of retardation. According to Suetonius, his weaknesses indeed broke out during childhood (*pueritia*). His parents, Antonia Minor

¹⁴ Arist. *GA* 775a on male children. Nuanced approaches concerning the motives for survival include Patterson 1985; Edwards 1996; Rose 2003: 29–49.

and Drusus, had many babies, only three of whom survived (Germanicus, Livilla, and Claudius). Was it for this reason that they decided to keep the young Claudius, though they held him in contempt? The reaction of his family is revealing: they expected that he would never be able to hold any office and entrusted him to a pedagogue, a former muleteer who acted like a brute (according to Claudius). Antonia Minor considered her child “a monster of a man, not finished by Mother Nature but only half-done,” and if she wanted to accuse somebody of dullness she used to say that he was even more stupid than her son Claudius. His grandmother Livia treated him with the utmost contempt and spoke to him only through brief and stern notes or through messengers. When he was over twenty years old, he was covered in a cloak when he attended the gladiatorial games given in honor of his father. Though it is not explicitly stated, we may suppose that also on earlier occasions the imperial family did their best to conceal young Claudius from the public eye. At the same time, Prince Claudius was represented in urban propaganda and used in matrimonial strategies in very much the same way as other members of the Julio-Claudian imperial house. Moreover, the emperor Augustus did not object to him holding a priesthood or presiding over games, as long as he was carefully supervised. To Augustus, even holding office was not considered an impossibility for Claudius.¹⁵ One would certainly like to know more about Claudius’ early childhood. Did the custody of the *paedagogus* keep him at an even greater distance from his parents compared with other aristocratic children? Did he have friends, playmates, or other forms of social interaction in his early years? Would these persons have reacted as cruelly as his close family? Unfortunately, ancient biographers were not that interested in these psychological details of childhood. It would also be interesting to know whether it was the appearance of mental retardation that made Claudius’ family so embarrassed or the malformation of his body. Most likely, it was a combination of both.

In 375 CE, Basil of Caesarea mentioned mothers of monsters, who hid their babies in darkness, ashamed of their congenital disabilities (Bas. *Ep.* 210.5). On the other hand, medical writers refer to young children with dislocated limbs, who crawled about on one sound leg, supporting themselves on the ground with the hand of their sound side (Hipp. *Art.* 52 [4.228–233 Littré]). In the latter case, the impairment does not seem to have been that embarrassing, though obviously as a consequence of accidents many more people in antiquity than today would have walked with impaired mobility. In the Syriac apocryphal Acts of Mar Mari, we read about the paralyzed daughter of King Shahgird: she was continually left behind in the house and was not taken to festivals or religious activities by her ashamed family (*Acts of Mar Mari* 12 [ed. and tr. Jullien and Jullien, *Les actes de Mar Mari*, 23 (Syriac) and 28 (French)], cited in Horn 2009a: 193–4). In the case of lower-class families, we sometimes read about disabled children being

¹⁵ See Garland 1995: 40–2; Gourevitch 1998: 468–70 on the Claudius case and Little’s disease. Such diagnoses have been criticized by Karenberg and Moog 2004. See Suet. *Claud.* 1 (many children, three surviving), 2 (pedagogue), 3 (mother and grandmother mocking him), and 4 (Augustus’ opinion). See Hurlet 1997 on propaganda and matrimonial strategies.

hidden inside the house. When knocking at the door of a poor widow's house, almsgivers in Egypt found the mad daughter of a poor laundress strolling around naked in her mother's impoverished little house (*Apophthegmata Patrum* N 263). In another Egyptian collection, we hear of a child suffering from rabies being tied up inside the house (*Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 22.3). Obviously, keeping a child tied up in a room was the most practical solution when both parents had to leave the house to work on the land.

However, concealment of a disabled or deformed infant does not necessarily imply shame or antipathy. Herodotus mentions a Spartan Ugly Duckling fairy tale: a baby born of wealthy parents appeared to be hideous and horrible. Nevertheless, the worried parents provided her with a nurse, who attended the temple of Helen daily together with the little child. By order of the parents, the nurse was not allowed to show the child she carried in swaddling in her arms to any passerby. Eventually, she displayed the baby to a woman, who caressed her head and predicted that the girl would become the most beautiful woman in Sparta, which indeed happened (Hdt. 6.61). Herodotus also records that the Lydian king Croesus did not count his second child as a son of his, since he was deaf-mute. We do not even get to know the boy's name; all of Croesus' hopes were invested in his elder son Atys. In the same way, people tended not to count disabled children in census reports, as nowadays in many countries villagers hide their disabled child away in the safety of their homes rather than expose them to the larger community or send them to specialized institutions.¹⁶ But at the same time, Herodotus records that Croesus made all possible efforts, including attending oracles, to heal his son, a boy who was in good health and who continued to live in close proximity to his father (Hdt. 1.34, 38).

In the same way, parents did not give up but visited oracles and sanctuaries to obtain healing for their young children. Though healing inscriptions are usually vague about the ages of those attending, we do sometimes read about parents accompanying small children. Thus, a blind child is mentioned as well as a little girl who, by using the word *bonum*, informed her mother that she actually liked the water of a holy fountain. It was the first word she ever spoke, and from then on her muteness was cured (Greg. Tur. *Mart.* 2.38). When the cult of the saints became increasingly popular with the rise of Christianity, the attestations of blind, deaf, or lame children being healed increase exponentially, again testifying to caring parents searching for a solution. In both pagan and Christian healings, the hope and expectations prompted by medical knowledge were quite different from those today and might have played an important role in motivating parents to attend a sanctuary (Holman 2009).

While we teach our children not to stare openly or point at impaired persons, the ancient sense of humor and social conventions lead us to suppose that the disabled in antiquity were confronted with a different reality (Stahl 2010: 723–5). Cicero bluntly

¹⁶ Reports mention Thailand, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kenya, the Balkans, the Philippines, and elsewhere. See Jones and Webster 2010: 14–5.

states that bodily deformity and disfigurement provided excellent opportunities to make fun of somebody, as long as one knew the limits (Cic. *De orat.* 2.226, 239). He is obviously concerned with rhetoric against political enemies, not with (young) children. But a sixth-century case from Gaul shows that such mockery was sometimes directed at young children and their mothers. When a women in Bourges gave birth to a son who looked more like a monster than a human being, many looked at the child with laughter, and the poor mother was criticized because such a monster had come out of her (Greg. Tur. *Vita Martini* 2.24). A telling anecdote by Macrobius from the 440s mentions the respectable consular Marcus Servilius Pulex Geminus, who was invited by the artist Lucius Mallius and saw his host's ugly or deformed sons (*filios deformes*). He remarked that Mallius' art of creating was not matched by his art of painting, at which Mallius jocularly replied: "I procreate in darkness, I paint in the light." It is not explicitly stated that these boys were still in their early childhood, but in all likelihood their age would not have made much difference to the somewhat crude parental humor (Macr. *Sat.* 2.2.10). Whether the derision of peers was also a part of early childhood experience is difficult to say, though a passage from the apocryphal *Acts of Philippus* (sixth century) leads one to suspect it was. Nicoclides' daughter was being scoffed at. Was this due to the consequences of her suffering from a stroke or because of a scar on her eye? In any case, her companions laughed at her, and she felt ashamed and could not stand the insults anymore (*Acta Philippi* 4.4–6).

Even more alien to modern Western attitudes is the belief that disabled persons are somehow connected with evil (the Evil Eye) or calamity. However, an ethnological study of modern Rhodes emphasizes how members of a community who are handicapped or blind are often thought to have the power to ruin crops or to cause unproductivity and disorder, thereby affecting the community's prosperity. Similar thoughts appear now and then in ancient authors and in papyri. Again, it is left to our imagination as to how this would have affected a family with a disabled child in a small village where, for whatever reason, prosperity was declining (Bryen and Wypustek 2009).

Finally, one may ask whether some parents or educators deliberately resisted the mainstream reactions of concealment, mocking, fear, or contempt. Certainly, a Stoic line of thought regarded bodily defects as utterly irrelevant to happiness and true virtue. Here, however, the Stoics were not always consistent in their ideas. After all, the art of physiognomy, which claimed to determine people's inner characteristics by close study of their outward appearances, was a very popular branch of science in the early empire, even with Stoics who studied the corporeality of human emotions. Apart from a reference to love for a sick child, the Stoic philosopher Seneca never mentions the possible contradiction between the irrelevance of the outward appearance on one hand and the importance of bodily markers as physiognomical signs on the other in regard to young ones.¹⁷

¹⁷ On physiognomy, see the very useful survey by Evans 1969. Note Sen. *Ep.* 6.3 and 66.4 (inner self and outward appearance), 66.25 (virtue also possible with the infirm or the disabled), and 66.26 (love for both a sick and a healthy son). Weiler 2012 is a thorough survey of physiognomics and disabilities.

SCHOOLING OR LABOR

At about the age of six, children of the more or less well-to-do began primary schooling, either with the *ludimagister* or, in case of the wealthy aristocrats, by private tuition. In the ancient educational system—where oral instruction, imitation, drill, and monotonous repetition were fundamental and the aim was rhetorical proficiency—deaf children would not have had any chance of making progress (only in the sixteenth century did some educators begin to take an interest in the instruction of deaf-mutes). Due to a lack of education, deaf-mutes were often regarded as mentally retarded idiots and were deprived of many rights and privileges (Laes 2011b). The ancient focus on rhetoric and orality led authors to privilege the aspect of muteness over deafness, to the point that it sometimes seems as if they were not aware of the correlation between auditory disability and the inability to acquire language. But even if a child was mute from other causes (autism, speech impediment, or mental retardation), there was no way of improving his or her education. The same holds for blind children, though late antique sources mention a remarkable exception to the rule. The Alexandrian theologian Didymus the Blind (313–98 CE) had lost his sight when, as a child (according to the *Historia Lausiaca* at age four), he had just begun to learn reading and writing. He eventually arrived at a high degree of knowledge, even mastering complicated mathematical theorems. It was said that this learned man had managed to acquire reading skill by tracing out letters, and afterward syllables, carved in wooden tablets. His remarkable memory and the assiduous attention he paid to his teachers contributed to his unusual success and resulted in many people traveling to Alexandria just to watch the prodigy.¹⁸

Mental problems may have become evident when a child appeared to be unable to profit from school instruction. Again, it is Saint Augustine who realistically remarks that some defects go unnoticed in small children but are detected when a child appears to be unable to learn even the basic skills of reading and writing (Augustine *Ep.* 166.6.17 [*PL* 33.728] = *De origine animae hominis liber*). Livy reports on the dictator Lucius Manlius (fourth century BCE), who excluded his teenage son Titus Manlius (*filium iuvenem*) from the city, sending him to “slavish drudgery in a kind of jail or work-house” in the countryside among the dumb cattle, simply because the youth “had been a little slow of speech—unready with his tongue.” It is said that public opinion strongly disapproved of this parental behavior (Liv. 7.4.2–7 [Loeb trans.]). Herodes Atticus’ son Bradua, born ca. 145 CE, could not learn to read: his father bought twenty-four slave boys, to whom he gave names beginning with the letters of the alphabet, to help his son. Despite his initial reading problem (was he what we would call a dyslectic?), Bradua became a *consul*

¹⁸ Soz. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.15.1–3. However, according to Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 4.1, he never learned to write and never resorted to any teachers. All he had was his own conscience and the grace of spiritual knowledge.

ordinarius in 185 and was awarded a proconsulship (Philostr. VS 551), a career as successful as Titus Manlius, who became three times a consul and three times a dictator (Liv. 7.10). Though Claudius was held in utter contempt by his family, he was allowed to study; his writings were accomplished, and the emperor Augustus acknowledged his “richness of mind” and wondered how, despite his bad articulation, Claudius once managed to deliver an excellent public reading (Suet. *Claud.* 3–4).

Schools, and certainly higher education, were an option for a relatively small minority. For the vast majority of children in antiquity, initiation into the labor force was a slow and gradual process. In contrast to current attitudes in Western society, in antiquity children were seen as a parental investment and were expected to work for the family as soon as they were able. Impaired children were not an exception to this rule. Children learned the trade of their parents and did so on the very spot where they could help their parents at work. In the countryside they are likely to have spent their entire lives in the one place: a desire for mobility was absent in most ancient people. This way of life certainly created chances for the disabled, both the young and the adult. Blind people would acquire some independence and mobility as long as they stayed within a familiar environment. The deaf-mute managed to accomplish agricultural tasks just as well as their hearing and speaking peers. Using gesture, both groups developed communication skills that made daily working activities perfectly manageable. Nor would a diminished intellectual capacity have been problematic for the majority of manual jobs. As such, the so-called community concept integrated more disabled people into the labor process of everyday life than sheltered working places or special jobs for the impaired do in our own more complicated and sophisticated society. Since people did not problematize the phenomenon of disabled people at work at all, there are hardly any references in the literary sources: ancient historians have to rely on anthropology and cross-cultural comparison. Papyri occasionally mention impaired persons at work, though it is sometimes hard to find out whether words like *kophos* (deaf) are used as nicknames or as terms denoting a real impairment (Strassi 1997; Arzt-Grabner 2012). Only late antique sources, especially Gregory of Tours, explicitly mention disabled children who were employed to generate some income for the family (Laes 2011a). The absence of an elaborate social welfare system strongly encouraged the need to integrate these people as much as possible into daily life, even if this meant making a living as a beggar.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

In non-Christian antiquity, most women who never made it to marriage or motherhood were considered *femmes manquées*. Would this be the inevitable fate of women suffering from impairment? Though it is impossible to generalize about it, demographers agree that ancient society was mostly short of women. Lower life expectancy caused by the perils of childbirth, possible female infanticide, and the undernourishment of female babies may have contributed to this shortage of marriageable women, though the fact

that women were typically marrying at younger age than men could somehow make up the imbalance (Scheidel 2010). In such circumstances, it is not impossible that at least some disabled women found a husband. Plato suggests the possibility of marrying women with mental or physical defects (Pl. *Laws* 925 e–926 b). Herodotus mentions the lame Corinthian daughter Labda, who married into the rival clan of the Bacchiadae (Hdt. 1.196.2–3). He also reports on a girls' auctioning among the Babylonians, a custom that was still in use in Illyria in his day. In a remarkable form of group solidarity, the most beautiful girls, who had been auctioned for a high price, collected some of their money to reimburse the client willing to pay the lowest sum to marry one of the “ugly and deformed” girls who were not yet sold. In the same passage, it is also said that to common-folk men “usefulness” was much more important than beauty (Hdt. 5.92). This is a statement that again accords with a community concept, quite dissimilar from modern attitudes which stress exclusivity, romanticism, and free choice in marriage relationships. Such a mind-set, combined with the absence of strict categorizations in labels like handicapped or disabled, may have given the opportunity to at least some of these women to enter marital life.

In cases where marriage did not occur, it was obviously the family that took care of its disabled family member. Expulsion from the family had terrible consequences: in cases where no family was left and no marriage entered, the disabled in all probability were left to a wandering existence of begging. Cohorts of mendicant lepers, undoubtedly collections of all sorts of social outcasts, occasionally occur in the sources (Greg. Naz. *Or.* 43.63; see Parkin 2006).

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANITY

Early Christian sources have been mentioned more than once in this chapter: their emphasis on miraculous healing and wonders obviously produced many stories that reveal clues for those interested in the history of disabilities in daily life, though we must of course reckon with the literary and cultural conventions of miracle stories and hagiography and not take anecdotal evidence at face value. A much more complex question concerns the possible change brought about by the coming of Christianity. (A very similar controversy surrounds the possible impact of Islam on the way the disabled were approached: Ricordel 2010.) This issue is linked to the thorny question of interaction between ideology, popular mentality, and daily practice.

To be sure, early Christian theologians theorized about deformed persons, though just like their pagan peers they never came to a definition of handicap or disability. Since all people were children of God, the disabled were also part of the perfect divine plan. The existence of impaired persons was thus to be considered “natural” (Augustine *Civ. Dei* 16.8, 21.6–8). As the perfect architect, God had left a part of the house unfinished so that, by “restoring” parts of the remnants, his works might be revealed (Joh. Chrysost. *Hom.* 56.1). As in the case of congenital blindness in John 9, the blind man is no more a sinner

than every human being (Augustine *Tractatus XLIV in Ioannis Ev. Caput 9* [PL 35.1713–9]), and one cannot state that disabled children suffer punishment for their fathers' sins (Jerome *Ep.* 130.16; see Kelley 2009). On the other hand, others stressed the sin or ignorance of the parents involved and concluded that the births of deformed children were unnatural accretions, a mere mutilation of the goodness innate in us, to be transformed by God who transformed the elements of our nature by his divine abilities.¹⁹

It is difficult to say how such theological subtleties affected people's minds or their everyday behavior, though some sermons from the south of Gaul suggest contempt for and the blaming of sinful parents responsible for the birth of disabled children. The same goes for speculation as to the way deformed and monstrous individuals were to be resurrected on Judgment Day. Augustine's remarks on the matter prove that at least some Christians had raised questions about this (Augustine *Civ. Dei* 22.12, 18; *Ench.* 87, 92; see Kelley 2009: 221–4). But does Augustine's assertion that the disabled would rise restored, their deformity removed but their substance intact, suggest that Christians did not consider disabilities to be constituent features of a person's individuality? In the same way, one might ask whether the Christian discourse on the virtue of the deformed body actually affected the daily lives of disabled children. The story of the apostle Peter's paralyzed daughter Petronilla, who was not healed by her father because her disability protected her from suitors (before her lameness at age ten, she was perceived as a very beautiful girl), is mentioned to stress that such children were more fit for a virtuous life of chastity and virginity.²⁰ Presumably, Jerome's account of wretched parents who made it a practice to dedicate their deformed and crippled daughters to virginity because they would not find suitable husbands is more revealing of reality. Occasionally, the placement of disabled boys in monasteries is also recorded, such as the leprosy boy who brought shame and embarrassment to his father who was a governor.²¹

Other Christian ideas seem at first glance to be more apt to influence daily practice. The cult of martyrdom and asceticism, an ideal sometimes instilled in children, could enhance the status of the deformed body; again, harsh reality might have been quite different from the pious ideal (Horn 2009b). Christian authors explicitly denounce abortion, exposure, and infanticide, and no source in the time before Constantine mentions that Christians practiced exposure of children. However, none of the apologetic texts mentions deformed or disabled children.²² Whether all this actually resulted in a change of practice and the abolition of child abandonment is another question entirely.

¹⁹ Ps.-Clementin. *Hom.* 19.22.5–8 (on ignorance as when to have sexual intercourse); Greg. Nyss. *Ep.* 17 (SC 363.196); see Kelley 2009: 213–5.

²⁰ The story of Peter's daughter is preserved in the early fifth-century Coptic papyrus Berlin 8502, belonging to the collection of the apocryphal Acts of Peter; see Kelley 2009: 216–7. The text is most easily accessible as *Acta Petri*, in Bovon and Geoltrain 1997, 1049–52 (trans. Poupon). Augustine refers to the scene in *c. Adim.* 17.5 (PL 42.161).

²¹ Jerome *Ep.* 130.6 (daughters); R.-G. Coquin, *Livre de la consécration du sanctuaire de Benjamin*, Cairo 1975: 174–5 (son, Coptic example, seventh century) cited in Gasco 2005: 285.

²² For example, Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 6.20. See Bakke 2005: 121–6; Horn and Martens 2009: 222–5 (Christians' concepts and practice); Kelley 2009: 205. See also Evans Grubbs (2009) as well as the chapter by Evans Grubbs in this volume.

Indeed, there is strong evidence for the practice of child abandonment throughout Late Antiquity (after Constantine) and the Middle Ages. Undoubtedly, many disabled children were left to die. The condemnation of exposure seems to have been more a product of self-definition, opposing Christian practice to pagan custom (Vuolanto 2011). The Christian discourse on almsgiving and the charity due to beggars (whose number certainly included disabled children) might have sometimes improved their daily lives, though wandering bands of beggars were an inescapable part of social life throughout Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages (e.g., Joh. Chrysost. *Hom. in Ep. I ad Corinth.* 21.5 [PG 61.176–79]; see Finn 2006; Parkin 2006).²³

CONCLUSION

This chapter has proved to be very much a history of the *longue durée*. Source material from the classical Greek era up to the seventh century CE has been used, and rather freely juxtaposed, to illustrate the conditions of daily life for, popular mentality about, and philosophical and theological attitudes to deformed or disabled children. The potential for gradual change in the wake of the newly introduced religion of Christianity has also been discussed.

The diverse source material suggests possibilities for differentiation on at least three levels: the disability involved; the social class of the disabled; and the gender of the children involved. Speech impediments and deaf-muteness were first and foremost a problem for children of the aristocratic elite and the *nobiliores*. While such impairments would hardly have prohibited children in the countryside from performing their daily tasks, children of the well-off would have found themselves utterly unable to benefit from ancient education, which was based on oral delivery and aural reception. As a consequence they would have been deprived of the opportunity to participate as a full-fledged person in adult life. On the other hand, the presence of slaves and proper accommodation might have helped mobility-impaired members of the upper classes, whereas the same impairments made the mobility impaired belonging to the lower classes more or less unfit for agricultural tasks. Blindness, whether congenital or acquired, could be compensated for in the case of farmers and villagers through the assignment of less difficult manual tasks or, in the case of the rich, by slaves lending a helping hand. Oral delivery and aural reception could help the visually impaired who wished to participate in rhetorical culture. The absence of an ideal of mobility (the modern *homo viator*) might have alleviated the conditions of blind children. However,

²³ Hospitals were a creation of Christianity, yet we know little about how sick or disabled children were treated in monastic hospitals. Though special institutions for very young children and for the elderly existed, we do not hear of special treatment for the impaired (Miller 1997; Leyerle 2002; Crislip 2005).

the dependence and possible isolation that accompanied this disability made writers describe it as *odiosa caecitas* (odious blindness).²⁴ In a society where the majority of people were illiterate by modern Western standards, many mental disabilities would have passed unnoticed. The problem might have been more acute among the upper classes than among the lower. However, serious mental problems affecting the performance of even simple tasks might have led to an isolated life of concealment or to public mockery. In the case of slave children, some bodily deformities or mental disabilities may have yielded higher prices on the slave markets. The same seems to be true in the case of deaf slaves, whose discretion was highly esteemed, and deaf-mutes, who communicated with gesture, a remarkable skill that did not go unnoticed.²⁵ Among slaves, the inability to work as a result of blindness or impaired mobility was the biggest problem. When it came to gender, worries about the inability to enter marriage mostly concerned deformed girls. This anxiety extends to the Christian period, where entrance to a monastery provided a solution for the impaired and is also mentioned for daughters.

The subject of disabilities is intrinsically linked to families. When disabled children appear outside their families, it is in exceptional and “abnormal” circumstances: their exposure; participation in a wandering group of beggars (following rejection by or the death of parents or relatives); their admittance to a hospital or monastery. Most of the time, it was the simple need for workers that kept disabled children in their families. People just made the best of it, and in a world that lacked the specialization of present-day society most of the disabled could somehow perform their tasks. The extent to which the disabled were integrated into the families into which they were born contrasts with the West in the modern era. Here, treatment in specialized institutions, employment in sheltered workshops, and the foundation of facilities with special accommodation for the mentally disabled have been the norm, though in the last thirty years the practice has been to move the disabled, mentally as well as physically, back into the larger community.

If one approaches the subject of disabled children from the point of view of ancient literary writers—invariably people from the upper classes—one may be tempted to state that such children were meant to be permanent outsiders in ancient society. They would never achieve full-fledged adult status or be able to exercise full authority and responsibility. On the other hand, the majority of the impaired were perhaps more fully integrated into daily life than in present-day Western countries, where, set apart by terminology, legal protections, and medical categorization, they are classified as *special cases*. Paradoxically enough, in the ancient world these “permanent outsiders” somehow turn out to be “outsiders within.”

²⁴ Cic. *Tusc.* 1.87; 5.29 (*incommoda*, “uncomfortable”); 5.111 (*horribilis ista caecitas*, “that horrible blindness”).

²⁵ *Dig.* 21.1 on the sale of slaves and possible restitution in the case of a disabilities or illnesses. Plut. *Mor.* 520 c. on monster markets. On the Roman emperors and their fascination with monsters, see Garland 1995: 45–58.

Abbreviations

Kühn = Kühn, K. G. (1821–1833) ed. *Galenī Opera Omnia*. Leipzig: Car. Cnoblochii. 20 volumes.
 Littré = Littré, E. (1839–1861) ed. and trans. *Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*. Paris: J. B. Baillière.
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PART II

CHILDREN AND
CHILDHOOD IN
ANCIENT GREECE

CHAPTER 7

CHILDREN IN ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL GREEK ART: A SURVEY

JOHN H. OAKLEY

INTRODUCTION

GREEK art provides a rich source of information about childhood in ancient Greece, albeit one that has been poorly tapped until recently. The relatively new interdisciplinary field of childhood studies, characterized by the use of various methodologies and approaches that are derived from a wide range of scholarly subjects, is part of the reason for this new interest in ancient children. In addition, exhibitions of Greek art (e.g., Neils and Oakley 2003) and the study of particular aspects of Greek childhood (e.g., Golden 1990; Cohen and Rutter 2007) have added to our understanding of this phase of life in antiquity. Nevertheless, despite all this interest, no general overview exists that defines the changing nature of the depiction of children in Greek art at different times. This essay will analyze the depiction of children focusing mainly on the Archaic and Classical periods, when the range and variety of images of children were greatest, by examining how children are depicted as well as the full range of contexts in which they are found.

PRELUDE: BEFORE THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

Depictions of children occur in mainland Greece already by the late Neolithic period (5300–4500 BCE), a good example being the terracotta group from Sesklo of a woman seated on a stool holding a small child wearing what appears to be a *polos* (type of hat) (Neils and Oakley 2003: 33, fig. 1). This is the earliest known example of a *kourotrophos*, a woman who nourishes a child, and is a type that continues to be used in all phases of ancient Greek art as well as later in Western art.

During both the Neolithic and succeeding Bronze Age in Greece, the appearance of children in art is spotty and limited, yet enough remains to suggest that the mainland Greeks (Mycenaeans) viewed children primarily as family members, showing them mainly with parents or grandparents, while the Minoans of Crete were more interested in the various stages of childhood, showing them either alone or with their peers (Rutter 2003: 31–57). Some of the Minoan depictions are strikingly realistic, as is a small bronze boy from the Dictaeon Cave on Crete who crawls on all fours, his head cocked up slightly to the right while displaying a soft smile (Oxford, Ashmolean 1938.1162; Neils and Oakley 2003: 37, 237–8 cat. 38). His large head, chubby limbs and pudgy torso are also typical for a child of his age. Mycenaean depictions, in contrast, are normally not realistic.

At the end of the Bronze Age (ca. 1100 BCE) figural art disappeared in Greece, only to reappear regularly around 800 BCE during the Geometric Period (900–700 BCE). The sex of the stick-like silhouette human figures used on Geometric art at this time is often not certain. Children do appear regularly in the elaborate funerary scenes on some of the vases but are rendered primarily as smaller versions of the adult figures. Shortness of stature, however, is not always indicative of age, as sometimes adult figures are diminutive due to the size of the space reserved for them in the picture field. A large funerary krater in New York of ca. 750–735 BCE has two such short stick-like figures that can be identified as children (Metropolitan Museum of Art 14.130.14: CVA [New York, MMA 5 USA 37] pls. 8–13). One stands on top of the left side of the bier next to a larger male figure; they hold hands. The other child is posed below on the knee of a woman who is seated on a backed chair with footstool.

Children at this time are rendered primarily as small adults, although they can take child-like poses, as the pair on the New York krater do. They also sometimes appear in other ritual scenes, like the boy and girl shown standing between a male lyre player and a female chorus on a Boeotian Late Geometric pithoid jar of ca. 720–700 BCE (Thebes, Museum BE 469; Neils and Oakley 2003: 157, fig. 19). Some if not most of the female choruses—a frequent motif on Geometric vases—are probably girls, although some may be women. For example, Langdon (2007: 188–9) identifies the dancing females on a Late Attic *hydria* (water container) in Rome as girls. Additionally, some of the Geometric bronze figurines may be youths; however, the lack of detail in their rendering makes this uncertain, and they can just as easily be men. There is also the occasional *kourotrophos*, such as the remarkable terracotta in the Ortiz collection of ca. 700 BCE (Neils and Oakley 2003: 60, 225–6, cat. no. 23). She sits atop a high cylindrical throne, cradling in her left arm the infant seated upon her lap. The sex of the child is not determinable. Meanwhile, a fragment of an Attic Geometric vase in the Athenian Agora of ca. 750 BCE has been interpreted by some scholars as showing the Death of Astyanax, the son of Hector, but as is the case with most Geometric scenes possibly connected with myth, the identification is uncertain (Museum P 10201: Schefold 1993: 147, figs. 149a, 149b). The figure identified as possibly being this child is only partially preserved but is smaller than any of the figures surrounding him.

With the move away from silhouette stick figures in favor of outlined corporal figures, and the now certain use of mythological scenes, children still continued to be smaller

versions of adult figures in the Orientalizing period (700–600 BCE). Good examples are the boys shown on a relief *pithos* (storage jar) in Mykonos of 670 BCE who are victims of the Sack of Troy (Museum Inv. 2240: Rühfel 1984b: 48–9, figs. 17a–c). They are smaller versions of the men in the process of killing them, less the beard the men wear.

On Protoattic pottery, the young Achilles is shown being handed over by Peleus to the centaur Chiron for the boy's upbringing. The hero and boy are shown on one side of an amphora of 650 BCE in Berlin, and the centaur is on the other (Antikenmuseum 31573 A9: Rühfel 1984b: 62–3, figs. 23–24). Only a small part of the child sitting on his father's arm is preserved, but enough to recognize that he is a smaller version of an adult. Probably the most famous depiction of a child from this period is the boy flute player on the Chigi vase, a Protocorinthian *olpe* (jug) of 640 BCE, to whose music hoplites in formation move (Figure 7.1; Rome, Villa Giulia Inv. 22679: Simon-Hirmer and Hirmer 1976: pl. VII).

He steps to the right, head tilted back. The double-piped *aulos* that he plays is angled up and held in place by a *phorbeia* (chin strap) placed around his head. The instrument's case hangs from his arm. The group of hoplites in phalanx formation before him with spears raised in their right hands clashes against an opposing group of hoplites. This polychrome image with miniature figures is exquisite.

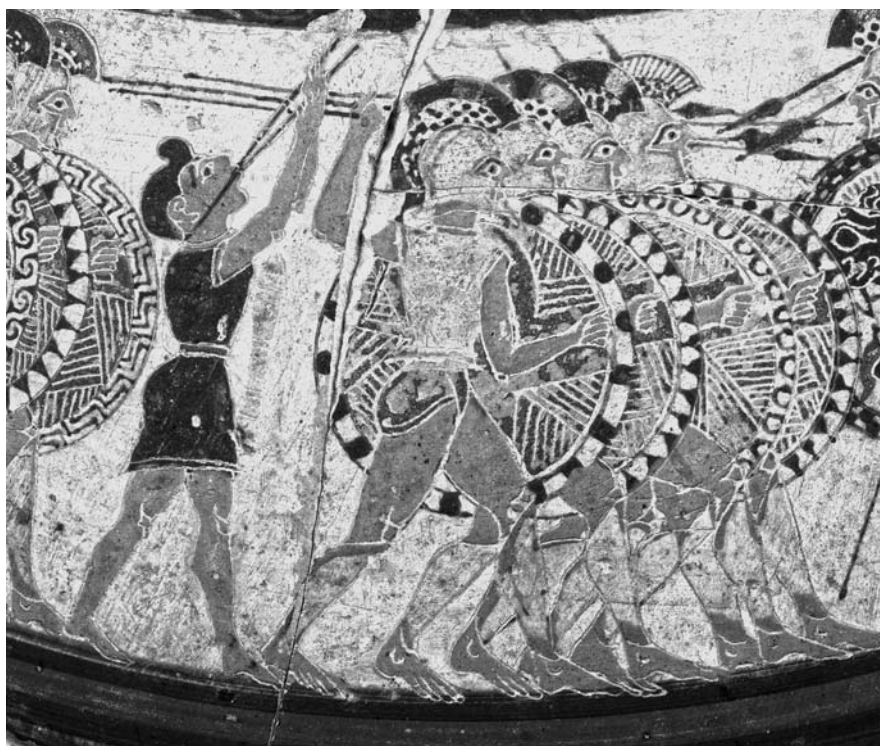


FIGURE 7.1 Boy flute player providing music for advancing hoplites, Proto-Corinthian *olpe*, the Chigi Vase, Rome, Villa Giulia Museum 22769, ca. 640 BC. (Credit: Immagini della Soprintendenza per I Beni Archeologici dell'Etruria Meridionale.)

An interesting terracotta model from Vari of 700–650 BCE depicts a child who lies atop a bier being transported on a wagon that also carries mourning women; the diminutive size of one of them suggests that she is a girl (Athens, National Museum 26747: Neils and Oakley 2003: 167, fig. 6). The boy lies on his back atop the covered corpse and raises both arms in the air in mourning. In Greek art children are often shown seeking contact with their deceased loved one, but perhaps none displays so much emotion as the one here. Thus, as earlier, children are not commonly depicted during the Orientalizing period but do occur in a variety of settings, both mythological and everyday, and on a variety of types of objects.

THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

In the Archaic period (600–480 BCE) children at first continue to appear mainly in both mythological scenes and those connected with ritual, the funeral being the most common of the latter. This pattern changes around the middle of the sixth century when a wide variety of scenes of everyday life also start to appear regularly on Attic black-figure pottery, including those with children. The indoor scene of wool working on a fragmentary Nikosthenic *pyxis* in Bochum of 530–520 BCE is a good example (Kunstsammlung der Ruhr-Universität S 1212: CVA Bochum 1 Germany 79 pls. 45, 6 and 46).

Here two young boys and a girl each interact directly with one of the female workers. The boy on the left raises both hands up in one of the most common gestures that all children make (Figures 7.2a and 7.2b). Usually it means “please pick me up and carry me,” although that may not necessarily be the case here. Children are also shown involved in other types of household work. A charming Boeotian terracotta group from the end of the sixth century shows a woman teaching a girl how to cook (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 01.7788: Neils and Oakley 2003: 112, 257, cat. no. 61). The seated mother is about to place something in the pot while the girl bends over slightly to look into the vessel.

Other terracotta groups consist of women taking care of children. Two found in a child’s grave on the island of Lipari show a woman bathing a baby in a bathtub (Figure 7.3). A woman on another in Malibu from 500–480 BCE holds the ankles of a boy perched atop her shoulders, a means of carrying children still used today (J. Paul Getty Museum 96.AE.102: Neils and Oakley 2003: 12, 266–7, cat. no. 71). A popular scene in Attic black-figure vase painting is women at a fountain. Occasionally children are present, as the boys and girls on a *hydria* of 520 BCE in Naples (Museo Nazionale SA 12: CVA Naples 1 Italy 20, pls. 34, 1 and 35, 1 and 3).

Kourotrophoi (nursing mothers) continue to be popular, and sometimes they hold twins, as ones in Ephesus and Syracuse do (Archaeological Museum KL 96.115 and Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi: Dasen 2005: 210, fig. 141; 201, fig. 131); the latter shows the children suckling, a rare variant. Sometimes it is a man who

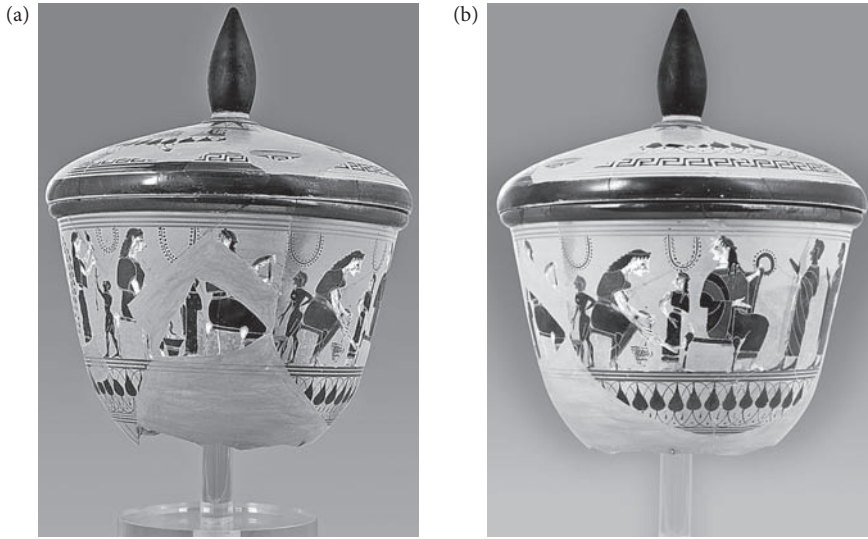


FIGURE 7.2A-B Boys and girl with women working wool, Attic black-figure Nikosthenic *pyxis*, Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Universität S 1212, ca. 530–520 BC. (Credit: Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr Universität Bochum, Department of Antiquities. Photo: M. Benecke.)



FIGURE 7.3 Woman washing baby in tub, terracotta group, Lipari, Museo Archeologico Regionale, T. 2514, Inv. 18429, end of the sixth century BC. (Credit: Archaeological Park of Eolian Island, Milazzo, Patti-Archaeological Museum “Luigi Bernabò Brea”—Lipari [Eolian Island—Italy]. Photo: Author.)

cares for the child, like the seated old man of a terracotta group in Boston who offers food to a young girl standing before him (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 97.350: Neils and Oakley 2003: 233, cat. no. 34). She extends her right hand toward the grapes he holds out; he has a pomegranate in the other hand. These Late Archaic terracottas give us some of the most realistic scenes of interaction between adults and children.

Children involved in work and play are two other new themes at this time, although not common ones. Young male servants are most common in athletic scenes from the palestra, like the ones who serve the athletes on an Attic red-figure calyx-krater by Euphronios of 515 BCE (Berlin, Antikenmuseum F 2180: Rühfel 1984a: 64, fig. 36). An example of play is found on an amphora by the Princeton Painter of 540–530 BCE, where we see a young boy and girl before two women, the left hand one of whom pushes another girl on a swing (Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum Inv. 65/1: Rühfel 1984a: 22, fig. 9a).

Youths are also shown in other athletic scenes, most notably as horse jockeys. Two are shown applying the whip atop their galloping steeds on a Panathenaic prize amphora now housed in London (British Museum B 133: Rühfel 1984a: 57, fig. 31). Boys are also shown competing in musical and dancing contests (Neils 2003: 154–6). On a Middle Corinthian (600–575 BCE) *aryballos* (oil container) in the Archaeological Museum in Corinth (C-54-1: Neils and Oakley 2003: 155, fig. 16) an *aulos* player provides the music for a boys' chorus. The lead boy, Pyrrhias, jumps and kicks his heels back to touch his buttocks in the Spartan dance called the *bibasis*, while three other pairs of boys stand stiffly, making ready for their leap (see the chapter by Kennell in this volume on the *bibasis*).

Another aristocratic pursuit pictured at this time is men courting boys (Beaumont 2003b: 63–4). A two-handled black-figure drinking cup of 530–520 BCE shows a pair of lovers on each side (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 08.292: Neils and Oakley 2003: 63, fig. 4; Reinsberg 1989: 189, figs. 105a–b). The youth on one side has jumped into the air and put his arms around his older male lover, while on the other side the two caress each other. Late in the period school scenes also start, Douris' cup in Berlin of 490–480 BCE (Neils and Oakley 2003: 66, 244–6, cat. no. 44) being the most famous example. Here four boys, two on each side, undergo lessons in various arts that include reading, writing, and flute and lyre playing.

Attic vase painting is our single most important source for images of children in the Archaic period, and there are a number of other unique or nearly unique scenes of children on Attic vases from this time. The boy shown at the cobbler's on an Attic black-figure *pelike* (a type of amphora) by the Eucharides Painter of 500–490 BCE (Oxford, Ashmolean G 427: Rühfel 1984a: 26, fig. 13; Neils and Oakley 2003: 100, 242, cat. no. 43) is one example, and the boy being punished on a black-figure *lekythos* (oil jug or flask) of 550 BCE, the name piece of the Sandal Painter, is another (Bologna, Museo Civico PU 204: Rühfel 1984a: 24, fig. 10; Neils and Oakley 2003: 26, fig. 5). He runs right to the woman before him, undoubtedly his mother, while a male on the left prepares to whack him with a sandal. Bad boys sometimes need to be punished.

One of the more common settings for depictions of children in the Archaic period is a departure scene where they, along with the women of the house, see the men off. A boy, dog, old man, and two women bid farewell to three warriors on an amphora from Group E of 540 BCE in Würzburg (Martin von Wagner Museum L 247: Rühfel 1984a: 17, fig. 6; Neils and Oakley 2003: 61, fig. 1).

It is unclear if the scene is mythological or not (Figure 7.4). In other cases, such as on the famous Late Corinthian *Amphiaraos* krater once in Berlin (Antikenmuseum F 1655: Oakley 2009a: 83, fig. 53), inscriptions leave no doubt that we are dealing with myth. Here *Amphiaraos*' family members, including his boy *Alcmaeon*, see their father off to Thebes.

Children also appear in other types of mythological scenes (on which see Pratt in this volume). One is as a newborn god or hero. Interestingly, gods are born as children while goddesses are normally born as adults (Beaumont 1995, 1998; Vollkommer 2000: 375). Thus, their birth was often a miraculous event, as is the case with the small and fully armed *Athena* who pops out of the head of *Zeus* on a mid sixth-century Attic black-figure amphora at Yale (University Art Gallery 1983.22: Neils and Oakley 2003: 116,

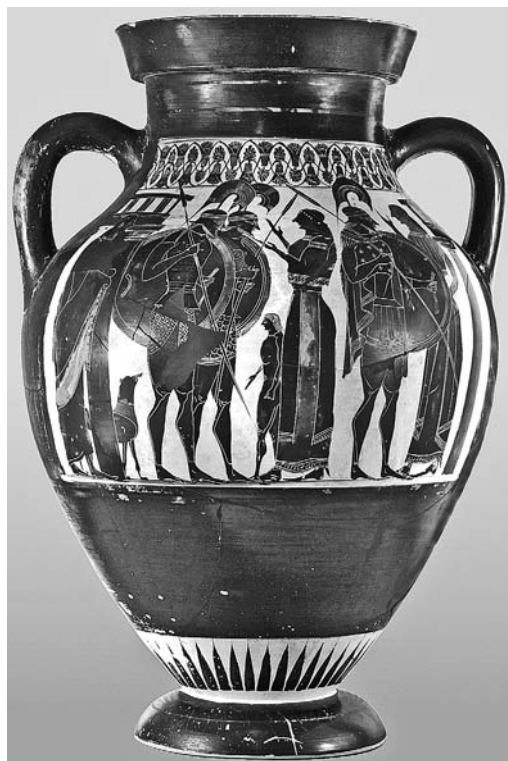


FIGURE 7.4 Warriors departing, Attic black-figure amphora, Group E, Würzburg, Martin von Wagner Museum L 247, ca. 540 BC. (Credit: Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg. Photo: K. Öhrlein.)

206–7, cat. no. 5). Several other gods are present, as is normally the case, including Dionysus, Apollo, and Ares along with the Eileithyiai, goddesses of childbirth, who raise their right hands to soothe the head of Zeus.

Child heroes are also shown under or being placed under the care of other mythological figures. We have one Attic black-figure amphora of 500 BCE on which a flying Hermes carries a baby Herakles (Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 1615A: Albersmeier 2010: 69, fig. 34). The god may be transporting the hero to Olympus, or he is bringing the boy to the Centaur Chiron shown on the other side of the vessel. Normally it is Peleus who is shown bringing his young son Achilles to Chiron for his upbringing, as Peleus does on the aforementioned Protoattic amphora and an Attic black-figure amphora of 520–510 BCE in Baltimore (Walters Art Museum 48.18: Neils and Oakley 2003: 90, 214–5, cat. no. 14; Albersmeier 2010: 66, 183–4, cat. no. 6).

Other child heroes are shown being adversely affected by war. On an Attic black-figure amphora from the end of the sixth century in Paris, Neoptolemos holds the young boy Astyanax by the ankle over his head and is about to slam him down on old King Priam who is sprawled over the altar of Zeus Herkeios (Louvre F 222: Albersmeier 2010: 81, fig. 51). Ascanius, the young son of Aeneas, fared better. He is shown on vases with his father and grandfather, Anchises, fleeing the city of Troy. Their descendants founded the city of Rome. An Attic black-figure amphora in Würzburg of 520–510 BCE with this subject has a playful air because of the large, friendly bounding dog in front of the boy (Martin von Wagner Museum L 218: Albersmeier 2010: 82, fig. 52).

Meanwhile, children continue to appear in scenes of ritual as in earlier periods. Once again, funerary art with funerary scenes provides some of the finest examples. An Attic black-figure *pinax* (terracotta plaque) of ca. 500 BCE in the Louvre (MNB 905: Neils and Oakley 2003: 165, fig. 3; see Beaumont in this volume, with her figure 9.1) gives us one of the most elaborate archaic depictions of the *prothesis* (laying out of the deceased).

Many of the figures are labeled, including the mother, father, grandmother, brother, sister, and aunts of the dead man (Figure 9.1). A girl labeled “sister” stands by the head of the bed, mourning as the other women in the scene do. Two other children are shown by the foot of the bed: an older girl who mourns and a young boy who moves toward and grabs the bier. They are likely other children of the deceased. The vase is by the Sappho Painter, who painted a number of other interesting funerary scenes, including that of a male corpse being lowered into a coffin on a bail-handled *oinochoe* at Bowdoin College (Museum of Art 1984.023: Neils and Oakley 2003: 166, 297–8, cat. no. 112). Included in the scene is a young girl, possibly the daughter of the deceased, who comforts an old man, likely her grandfather. Particularly moving is the black-figure *pinax* by Exekias of 540–530 BCE in Berlin, where a young child is passed between two of the eight women who sit or stand in a group attempting to comfort the sad widow (Antikenmuseum F 1813: Rühfel 1984b: 43, fig. 15).

Surprisingly, children are almost never shown at this time on Athenian gravestones, the “Brother and Sister” stele of 540–530 BCE being the primary exception (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 11.185 and Berlin, Antikenmuseum A 7: Neils and Oakley

2003: 179, fig. 19). The base of the stele is inscribed, and the youth's name on it has been restored as Megakles. He stands to the right, an *aryballos* (oil flask) hanging from his left wrist, a pomegranate in his left hand. At his side stands his little sister, Philo, who holds up a blossom to her nose.

Children are also on occasion pictured on votive reliefs, such as one from the Acropolis that may depict a family celebrating the *Apatouria*, the celebration connected with a boy being introduced into their father's phratry (Inv. 581: Neils and Oakley 2003: 144–5, fig. 5; see also Garland in this volume on the *Apatouria*). Two boys and a girl accompany their family, in addition to a pig that may be one that their father presented to the phratry for sacrifice. The large female figure on the left whom the procession approaches would then be Athena Phratia. Girls and boys are also shown involved in other rituals, such as the girls in the religious procession on a Middle Corinthian bottle in London of 600–575 BCE (British Museum 1865.7-20.20: Amyx 1988: pl. 99, 2; Rühfel 1984a: 117, fig. 65). It belongs to a group of vases whose scenes have been labeled as “Frauenfest,” although the exact occasion for these processions is uncertain (Amyx 1988: 228; see also Langdon in this volume). Sometimes the girls carry baskets on their heads as *kanephoroi*, a common role that they perform in ritual. The baskets normally held things used in sacrificing animals, including fillets, barley, and knives. (See further Garland in this volume on children and ritual.) Girl runners playing the part of *arktoi* (she-bears) are shown on *krateriskoi*, special vases found in sanctuaries of Artemis, including the one at Brauron (Neils and Oakley 2003: 151–2, fig. 11; Reeder 1995: 321–8, cat. nos. 98–100), while boys can be shown involved in extispicy, the examination of a liver to foretell the future, like the youth holding the organ before a warrior on an Attic red-figure amphora by the Kleophrades Painter of 480 BCE in Würzburg (Figure 7.5; Martin von Wagner Museum L 507: Neils and Oakley 2003: 158–9, fig. 23; Rühfel 1984a: 86, fig. 50).

The Archaic period, then, produced a far wider range of images of children than earlier, and a wider variety of media were employed. Children continue to be depicted regularly in funerary scenes and ritual processions, and *kourotrophoi* remained popular. New are the many renditions of children in everyday life, including images of household activities such as wool working and bathing, in addition to scenes of play, music, athletics, and courting. New mythological scenes with children include departures, such as that of Amphiaraos for Thebes, and the births of various gods, particularly Athena.

Children at this time continue to be shown as small adults, but the male children do not have beards like their elders often do. Greek artists were concerned with depicting the adult human bodies as anatomically correct, not accurately rendering the changing physiognomy of children. Thus, children were often shown as somewhat stiff, standing figures, like their male and female counterparts in large-scale sculpture, the *kouroi* and *korai*. In the few cases in which children appear in seated poses, they are unnatural, stiff poses, such as that of the boy seated behind a seated woman working at a table on a terracotta votive plaque from the Acropolis (Museum Inv. 2525: Rühfel 1984a: 21, fig. 8; Backe-Dahmen 2008: 68, fig. 33). Nevertheless, despite the artistic conventions of the time, occasionally a correctly rendered child's gesture occurs, telling us that the Greeks of this time period were observant of how children communicated. The boy raising his



FIGURE 7.5 Boy holding liver for extispicy, Attic red-figure amphora, Kleophrades Painter, Würzburg, Martin von Wagner Museum L 507, ca. 480 BC. (Credit: Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg. Photo: K. Öhrlein.)

two hands toward the woman opposite him that we noted on the black-figure *pyxis* in Bochum is a good example (Figure 7.2).

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

The heyday of picturing children in Greek art is the Classical period (480–323 BCE) when there was a greater variety of types of images than earlier, and a number of realistic representations of children appears in respect to their physiognomy, gestures, and poses. In general, the younger the children are, the less subtle and specific are their gestures, and boys tend to gesture more than girls (McNiven 2007). An increased interest in children after 430 BCE, particularly in Athenian funerary art, appears to be a reaction to the population loss (both militarily and due to the plague) that the city suffered during the Peloponnesian War—the death of a male child being not only a loss to the immediate family but also to the city, who needed to reman its armed forces (Oakley 2009b).

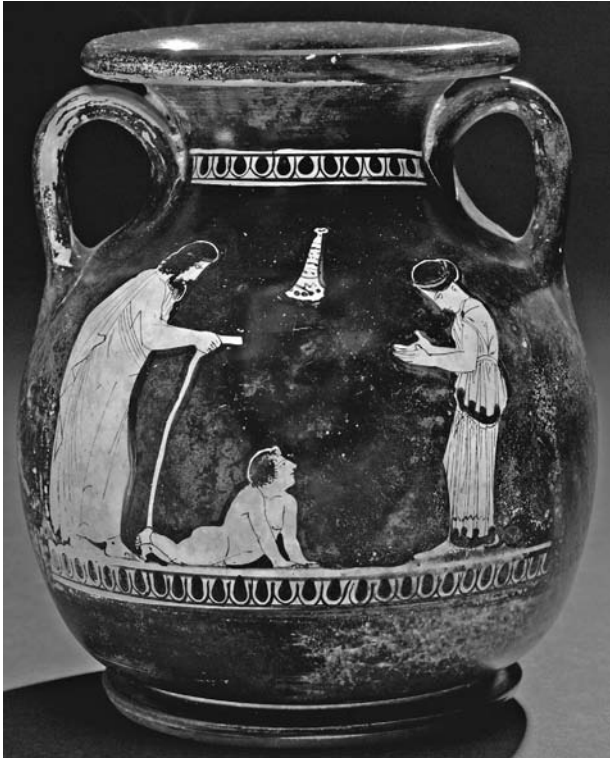


FIGURE 7.6 Child learning to crawl or stand-up, Attic red-figure *pelike*, Manner of the Washing Painter, London, British Museum E 396, ca. 430–420 BC. (Credit: The Trustees of the British Museum.)

Everyday scenes of the household (*oikos*) are found on several Attic red-figure vases, primarily on shapes used by women (Sutton 2004). One of the most touching depictions is in the British Museum (E 396: Neils and Oakley 2003: 72, 237, cat. no. 37).

It shows a young boy between a bearded man and a woman, almost certainly his mother and father (Figure 7.6). The youngster is attempting to crawl, pushing his chest up by straightening his arms. He looks attentively at his mother, who bends her head down looking directly at him and urging him on with extended hands. His body, with short chubby legs and plump chest, is realistically depicted for a child at this stage of life, which is about one year old.

Another realistic depiction of a child is found on an *alabastron* in Providence by the Villa Giulia Painter of 460–450 BCE, on which a baby boy has fallen asleep on the shoulder of the woman who carries him (Rhode Island School of Design 25.088: Neils and Oakley 2003: 236, cat. no. 36). Another older boy stands next to her, grasping her dress in apprehension and seeking safety. Even more strikingly realistic and familiar to many a modern parent is the scene found in the tondo of a cup in Brussels (A 890: Neils and Oakley 2003: 240–1, cat. no. 42). Here a young toddler squirms in a potty demanding

his mother's attention, who sits across from him. The child kicks his legs back and forth while stretching out both hands. His physiognomy is once again not that of a small adult but that of a child.

Other children are shown involved in work and play, and some of these scenes are new. Spinning tops, hoops, ball playing, riding a seesaw, and playing various games employing knucklebones are the most common. A *chous* (jug) in Malibu provides an excellent example. Shown on it are three squatting youths playing knucklebones (J. Paul Getty Museum 96.AE.28: Neils and Oakley 2003: 263, 278, cat. no. 86); the one on the right casts his bone, while the other two appear to mark their throws with their right hands. The middle one holds extra bones in his cupped left hand.

Boy servants continue at this time to be shown with their master in scenes from the palestra. A red-figure *chous* of 440–435 BCE by the Achilles Painter in Basel presents a *pais* holding an *aryballos* who stands between two nude athletes cleaning themselves with strigils (Figure 7.7; Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig BS 485: Rühfel 1984a: 68–9, figs. 40–41). In other scenes boys are shown involved in other types of work, such as the boy turning the potter's wheel on a red-figure calyx-krater of 440 BCE in Caltagirone (Museo Regionale della Ceramica 961: Rühfel 1984a: 71, fig. 42).

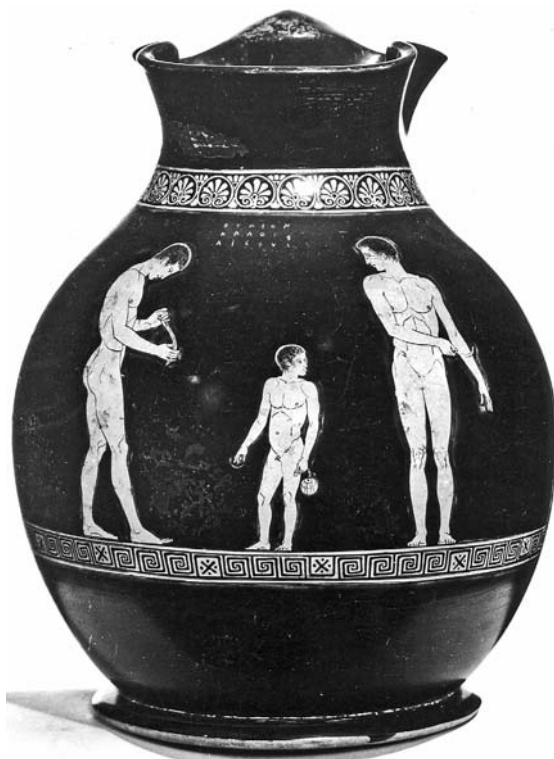


FIGURE 7.7 Boy assists youths at the palestra, Attic red-figure *chous*, Achilles Painter, Basle, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig BS 486, ca. 440–435 BC. (Credit: Photo: D. Widmer.)

Young girl servants are pictured in scenes of dressing (Lewis 2002: 28–33). One on a red-figure *pelike* by the Syriskos Painter in Berlin carries a folded garment over her left shoulder and an *exaileptron* (perfume/oil container) in her right hand (Antikenmuseum V.I. 4496: Rühfel 1984a: 73, fig. 43). She stands between two women, one of whom holds a mirror and *alabastron* (perfume/oil container) while the other ties her girdle. New in the Classical period are images of young dancing girls who entertain men. The most famous example is the name piece of the Phiale Painter with a school of music (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 97.371: Rühfel 1984a: 43, fig. 21). The young dancing girl here wears a provocative, short-skirt garment and plays the *krotala* (castanets) as she moves in step, much to the delight of a young man who gestures to her. Her mistress holds a *narthex* (staff of fennel), which she used to help the dancing girls keep time as well as to discipline them, if needed.

Athletic scenes with boys also continue, especially those of horse racing. A unique scene on an Attic red-figure column krater in London (British Museum E 485: Neils and Oakley 2003: 254, cat. no. 56) shows a boy learning how to mount a horse. He is guided by a balding man (his father?) as an older youth (his brother?) looks on. There are also scenes of schooling and musical competition with boys as earlier. A boy standing nearly erect, with head tilted up, sings before a seated *aulos* player in the tondo of an Attic cup in Leiden (Rijksmuseum PC 91: Rühfel 1984a: 49, fig. 25). A flute case hangs in the background between them.

Scenes of courting virtually die out at the start of the Classical period, this old aristocratic behavior no longer favored by the vase painters of the democracy. However, children continue to be shown often in departure scenes, such as on an Attic red-figure amphora in London (British Museum E 282: Backe-Dahmen 2008: 26, fig. 7; Neils and Oakley 2003: 68–9, figs. 8a–8b) with a warrior on one side and a woman holding a child on her left arm on the other. The baby extends both hands out while the woman gestures with her free right hand as if bidding adieu.

Scenes of myth with children still include those who suffer because of war, such as Hector's son, Astyanax, at the Sack of Troy, and scenes of the young being entrusted to others for their upbringing, education, and safety, such as Achilles being given to Chiron, also continue. A pair of Lucanian red-figure vases pictures the Herakleiai (children of Herakles and Deineira) under the care of Iolaos (Albersmeier 2010: 79–80, fig. 50).

Virtually new is an interest in pictures of children in danger or suffering violence, most of whom are mythological figures (see also Pratt in this volume). Although a few of these scenes date to the last ten years of the Archaic period (490–480 BCE), they are most popular in the Classical period. A well-preserved Attic red-figure *hydria* in New York shows the baby Herakles and his twin, Iphikles, being attacked by snakes sent by Hera (Figure 7.8; Metropolitan Museum of Art 25.28: Neils and Oakley 2003: 70, 212, cat. no. 10). His stepfather, sword in hand, comes to help, but his efforts are in vain as Herakles has the situation well under control. The boys' mother flees in fright, while Athena stands in the background, fully knowing the safe outcome.

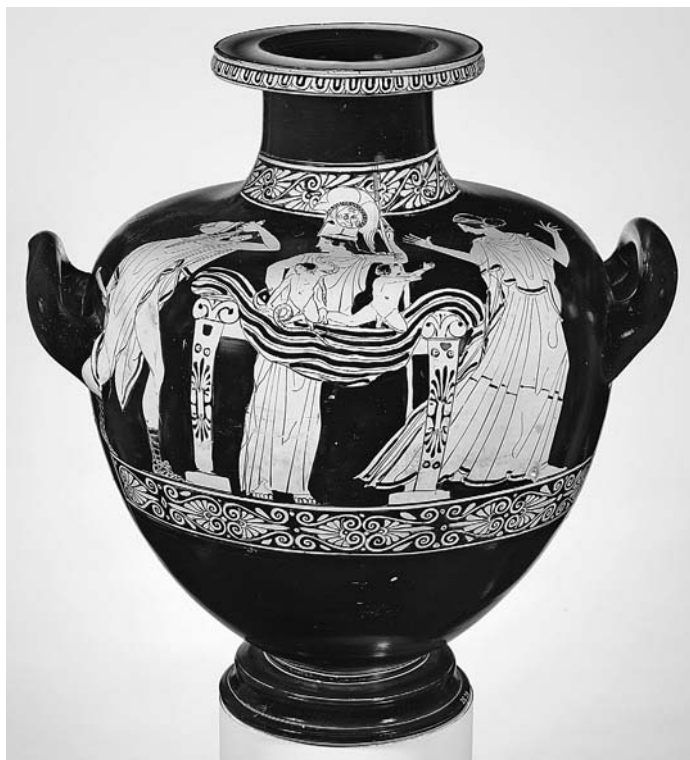


FIGURE 7.8 Infant Herakles strangling the snakes, Attic red-figure *hydria*, Nausicaa Painter, Metropolitan Museum of Art 25.28, ca. 460–450 BC. (Credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1925 (25.28). Image: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

In other cases, one of the parents provides the source of danger. Some of the most dramatic scenes are those of Medea slaying or already having slain her children. A spectacular Lucanian red-figure calyx-krater in Cleveland (Museum of Art 1991.1; Neils and Oakley 2003: 23, 217–8, cat. no. 17) shows Medea's two boys strewn across an altar as she flies above in her serpent-drawn chariot. An old Thracian nurse and *paidagogos* (tutor/attendant) mourn by the altar while Jason glowers at Medea from the other side.

Fathers, as well as grandfathers, could also harm their children. A Paestan red-figure calyx-krater by Asteas in Madrid of 350 BCE (Museo Arqueológico 11094; Albersmeier 2010: 78–9, fig. 49) shows Herakles killing one of the children he had with Megara, his first wife. In his maddened state he prepares to throw the pleading child into a fire, as Megara flees. Several Classical red-figure vases, meanwhile, show King Akrisios as he prepares to expose his grandchild Perseus and his daughter Danae in a chest that will be put out to sea. A *lekythos* by the Providence Painter in Toledo (Museum of Art 69.369; Neils and Oakley 2003: 203, 213–4, cat no. 13) shows the boy in the chest with mother and grandfather standing to either side.

At other times, gods or goddesses pursuing their loves pose the danger. Although these pursuit scenes start at the very end of the Archaic period, they are most popular in the Classical period. Zeus pursuing Ganymede is a good example. Often this boy has his toy hoop with him, as on a red-figure *lekythos* of 440–430 BCE in Indianapolis (Museum of Art 47.35; Neils and Oakley 2003: 215, cat. no. 15).

In addition, scenes of the births of gods and heroes continue, although some new ones appear, such as the Birth of Erichthonios. The Richmond Museum of Fine Arts has one of the finest representations of this event, a late fifth-century Attic red-figure calyx-krater by the Nikias Painter (81.70; Neils and Oakley 2003: 88, 208, cat. no. 6). Athena is shown taking the boy from Ge (Earth), as various divinities including the boy's father, Hephaestus, look on at this miraculous event. The boy is colored white, wears a band of amulets across his chest, and reaches out toward the goddess (Figure 7.9). Toward the end of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians became very interested in their autochthony, as underscored by the interest in this myth.

The birth of Helen is a scene favored by the South Italian, not Attic, vase painters. Helen is shown popping out of her egg atop an altar on an Apulian red-figure



FIGURE 7.9 Ge gives the baby Erichthonios to Athena, Attic red-figure calyx-krater, Nikias Painter, Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts 81.70, ca. 410 BC. (Credit: The Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.)



FIGURE 7.10 Helen hatching from the egg, Apulian red-figure *pelike*, Painter of Athens 1680, Kiel, Antikensammlung-Kunsthalle B 501, ca. 360–350 BC. (Credit: Antikensammlung-Kunsthalle zu Kiel.)

pelike in Kiel (Kunsthalle B 501; Neils and Oakley 2003: 115, 209, cat. no. 7). The fleeing woman on the left must be Leda, and the man on the right is the shepherd who found the egg left by Nemesis, the mother of Helen in the version of the story given here (Figure 7.10).

Some of the same scenes of children involved in ritual continue, including pictures of the *prothesis*, which are found on Attic red-figure and white-ground vases as well as on several South Italian tomb paintings. Unique is a white-ground *lekythos* in Berlin of 430 BCE showing a mother carrying the corpse of her ca. ten-year-old son (Figure 7.11; Antikenmuseum F 2447; Backe-Dahmen 2008: 134–5, fig. 74). Other white-ground *lekythoi* show a child at the grave or making ready to depart with Charon, the old ferryman. One in Munich by the Bird Painter shows an infant on the steps of the grave trying to raise himself in a manner similar to the boy on the Attic red-figure *pelike* we looked at earlier (Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 7619; Neils and Oakley 2003: 171, 302, cat. no. 117). A woman, probably his mother, urges him on from the right. The young boy on another *lekythos* in New York stands on a rock before the boat of Charon (Metropolitan Museum of Art 09.221.44; Neils and Oakley 2003: 162, 174, 300–1,



FIGURE 7.11 Mother holding corpse of dead boy, Attic white-ground *lekythos*, Sounion Group, Near the Inscription Painter, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin F 2447, ca. 460–450 BC. (Credit: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.)

cat. no. 115). The boy holds the pole to a wheeled cart in his left hand and turns and extends his other toward the woman behind him, his mother. His pose and the eye contact that they make highlight the sadness of his departure.

Classical funerary sculpture is one of our richest sources for images of children. Some Athenian gravestones show only a child, indicating that they are markers for a child's grave. The stele of a chubby boy named Mnesikles with a toy cart is the sole figure on a gravestone in Princeton, for example (Figure 7.12; University Art Museum y1986–87: Neils and Oakley 2003: 181, 305, cat. no. 122). Other children are shown in the care of an adult, as is the swaddled baby on the stele of Ampharete in the Kerameikos from the end of the fifth century BCE (P 695, Oberlaender Museum: Rühfel 1984b: plate between 208 and 209, fig. 60; Neils and Oakley 2003: 3, fig. 1). The inscription tells us that this is grandmother and child, not mother and child as one would expect. The bulbous shape of the babe's head combined with the small nose and chubby arm and hand is strikingly realistic, underscoring once again how some Classical artists were keenly observant of children. Some children are newborns and shown in a swaddling cloth and bonnet (e.g., Rühfel 1984b: 152–3, fig. 63; Neils and Oakley 2003: 185, fig. 26)



FIGURE 7.12 Boy with toy roller, Attic gravestone of Mnesikles, Princeton University Art Museum y1986-67, ca. 400–350 BC. (Credit: The Princeton University Art Museum. Museum Purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921 Fund.)

and on one Thessalian gravestone, a child is being nursed by a seated woman (Larissa Museum: Batziou-Efstathiou 1981: 48, fig.1).

A father with two daughters is found on the stele of the cobbler Xanthippos in London (British Museum 1805.7-3.183; Neils and Oakley 2003: 179, fig. 18; 184, fig. 25; Rühfel 1984b: 127, fig. 51). He has affectionately placed his hand on the back of the younger one who extends her hands up, as if wanting to hold the cobbler's last he holds out in his right hand. The other girl stands by his knees gesturing with her left hand, a bird in the other.

Children are also often shown on gravestones as part of the family. On a stele in Berlin (Antikenmuseum Inv. Nr. 1473; Backe-Dahmen 2008: 27, fig. 8) a warrior makes ready to depart and performs the *dexiosos* (hand clasp) with his seated wife. In the background stands a slave girl holding a chest. Her short hair indicates her status. On the ground, meanwhile, grasping the cloth-covered leg of the chair is a squatting baby boy who attempts to raise himself up. Natural poses such as this for children are common in the Classical period.

Another example of a naturalistic pose for children is when they are shown standing between the legs of their parents. Often the children reach up to them. The young

girl on a fragmentary stele in Athens of 380 BCE illustrates this well (National Museum 3289; Rühfel 1984b: 155, fig. 64). Sometimes the children shown are servants or slaves. Such is the case with the small boy seated and bent over with head on arms by the standing youth on the famous Illisos stele of ca. 340 BCE in Athens (National Museum 869; Backe-Dahmen: 126 fig. 71; Rühfel 1984b: 143, fig. 58).

Classical Attic votive reliefs are another source for illustrations of children. Normally they are shown with their family before gods and heroes, sometimes also with servants, priests and sacrificial animals. Children of various ages are rendered, probably reflecting the true makeup of the family dedicating the relief. The younger tend to be less involved in the ritual, and the infants often are held by slaves shown at the end of the procession. All these elements are visible on a relief in Paris dedicated to Asclepius and Hygeia (Louvre MA 755; Lawton 2007: 44, fig. 2.1). Children also sometimes appear on votive reliefs outside of Athens, such as a fourth-century relief from Archinos on which a mother presents her newborn to Artemis (Lamia Museum AE 1041; Neils and Oakley 2003: 145, fig. 6; Rawson 2011: 304, fig. 18.5).

A few Attic red-figured vases show the *arktoi* (girls playing the bear) performing the ritual run (Rühfel 1984a: 104–5, figs. 58–60; Reeder 1995: 322–8, cat. nos. 98–99; see also Garland in this volume)—they appeared earlier on vases from the Archaic period. Boys also continue to be shown assisting in rituals, but now their roles are more varied than earlier. In scenes of sacrifice they assist the priest at the altar in a variety of ways. On a bell krater in Frankfurt a boy standing by an altar holds up a small tray with offerings for the priest beside him (Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Inv. Nr. VFß 413; Rühfel 1984a: 88, fig. 52). On a good number of other Attic red-figure vases the boys are *splanchnoptai*, ones who roast entrails on a spit (e.g., Rühfel 1984a: 90, fig. 53). At other times they lead the sacrificial animals toward the altar (e.g., Neils and Oakley 2003: 158, fig. 22).

A wider variety of wedding scenes is rendered in the Classical period than in the Archaic—a trend that reflects and is part of the greatly increased interest in woman in Athenian vase painting at this time. Young girls can be shown in scenes of the *loutrophoria* procession to collect the waters for the bridal bath (e.g., Oakley and Sinos 1993: 60–1, figs. 16–19), bridal preparations (e.g., Oakley and Sinos 1993: 68, figs. 32–35), the bridal procession to the couple's new home (e.g., Oakley and Sinos 1993: 90, figs. 72–73), and the *Epaulia*, the final day of the traditional wedding when presents were sent by procession to the bride in her new home. The finest representation of the last event is on a red-figure *lebes gamikos* (wedding bowl) in St. Petersburg (Hermitage Inv. 15592; Oakley and Sinos 1993: 123, fig. 124; Rühfel 1984a: 111, fig. 62). Here a finely dressed young girl looks up to the seated bride holding a *lekanis* in her left hand, a vessel the literary sources tell us was used by the father of the new bride to send her presents. A few vases show a baby boy being handled by the bride, apparently to help ensure the probability of male offspring (e.g., Oakley and Sinos 1993: 72, fig. 40), and a few others show the *pais amphithales*, a boy with both parents still living, either sleeping with the couple on their wedding night or at other events (e.g., Oakley and Sinos 1993: 83, figs. 60–61, 114–15, figs. 112–114).

New is a scene on an Attic red-figure volute-krater of 440–430 BCE from Spina by Polygnotos, showing girls of several ages and a boy involved in the ecstatic worship of Kybele and Sabazios (Ferrara, Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Spina T 128; Rühfel 1984a: 119, fig. 66). The pair of gods is enthroned on one side of the vase before a priestess and altar. *Auloi* players provide the music for the dancers who fill out most of the rest of the picture. Some of the girls dance with snakes; others play a tympanum. The boy plays a pair of cymbals. The intoxicated nature of their worship is accentuated by their action-filled poses.

Perhaps the single most important sources for images of children are Attic red-figure *choes*, which become very popular from 430 BCE to a little after the end of the century. These jugs have long been connected with the *Anthesteria*, an Athenian Spring festival, and it is thought that they may have contained a three-year-old's first drink of wine (see Garland in this volume). Over a thousand of them have been found and typically show one or more children—boys far more often than girls—involved in various forms of play (Neils and Oakley 2003: 145–9). Often a *chous* with ivy wreath, bunches of grapes, and sometimes ritual cakes is shown. Some of the more favored subjects include crawling babies, children with toys (rollers, knucklebones, go-carts, sticks, balls, and pets, such as Maltese dogs, birds, hares, and goats), acrobatics, and dancing. Rare are scenes of boxing, music making, and horse racing. Some scenes appear to be connected with a ritual, but if this is the *Anthesteria* or not is unclear. One famous example by the Eretria Painter in Athens shows a young boy being placed on a swing by a bearded man as two other boys look on (National Museum ex Vlastos: Rühfel 1984a: 127, fig. 68).

Some of the *choes* show satyrs, including satyr children. These offspring occasionally appear on other vases, such as a red-figure *stamnos* by the Phiale Painter in Warsaw (Figure 7.13; Oakley 1990: pls. 62,1 and 63,1–2). Normally they behave like other children, although their fathers are often more affectionate than their real-life Athenian counterparts (Shapiro 2003: 104–5). In this case maenads (or women dressed as maenads) make ready for a Dionysiac festival. One sets a *stamnos* on a table, another holds a *barbiton* (type of stringed instrument), and the third carries an infant satyr at her waist. He extends both arms toward the woman in the center, suggesting that she is his mother.

The Classical period, then, was the time period that produced the greatest variety of images of children, and they are found on a very wide range of media, more than earlier. Indeed some objects, such as Attic red-figure *choes*, votive reliefs, and gravestones were particularly devoted to images of children, some of whom are shown in very realistic poses. This interest in children in Athens corresponds with the new interest in women, and both may reflect the contemporary concern about the makeup of the family reflected in Pericles's citizenship law of 451/450 BC, which decreed that only the offspring of two Athenian citizens could be a citizen, although this is only speculation. There are new scenes of work and play in the Classical period that introduce a much wider range of activities than before, such as pictures of dancing girls and boys and girls playing with various toys, such as tops, hoops, and a seesaw. Many of the types of scenes used in the Archaic period continue, including pictures of the household, athletic events, schooling,



FIGURE 7.13 Child satyr, Attic red-figure *stamnos*, Phiale Painter, National Museum, Warsaw 142465, ca. 440–435 BC. (Credit: Museum.)

music, funerary ritual, and marriage, but again there is a wider range of events depicted in the Classical period than in the Archaic. Boys, for example, are now shown assisting priests. In myth, a wider range of birth scenes appear than earlier, and scenes of children in danger occur much more frequently. Supplementing the picture of human children at this time are those of baby satyrs.

In addition, the greater range of realistic depictions of children from this time leads to a wide range of realistic depictions of children in the succeeding Hellenistic period (323–31 BCE), most notably in sculpture and terracotta figurines (Rühfel 1984b: 185–288). The statue of a young girl from Brauron affectionately holding a hare by her waist (Museum: Rühfel 1984b: left plate at 240–1) and a terracotta group in New York of two young girls playing *ephedrimos* (game similar to piggyback) provide a good example of each (Metropolitan Museum of Art 07.286.4: Rühfel 1984b: 211, fig. 86; Neils and Oakley 2003: 275, cat. no. 275). In short, as Lesley Beaumont (2003b: 79) observed of the Hellenistic period: “Images of children and childhood at this time become sentimentalized and idealized, both through the representation of cute childish behavior and physical attitudes and through the iconographic adoption of physically charming childish anatomy.”

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the wide range of images of Greek children from the Archaic and Classical periods provides a rich and unparalleled pictorial source for the study of children in antiquity. Children of all ages, from newborns to adolescents are pictured (see Beaumont 1994; Vollkommer 2000: 371–4; Ham 2006 for the stages of childhood). Among other things, these images show us how children worked and played and the roles they assumed in family life and ritual. One has to marvel at how many of these images strike a strong note of familiarity between past and present, either because of the real-life poses and appearance of the children or because the children and their parents do things and react to things in ways that children and parents still do today. On the other hand, the images are nearly uniformly positive ones and do not show angry children throwing temper tantrums or crying, for example. This is clearly partly due to artistic convention, since Archaic figures tend to show the so-called “Archaic Smile” or none at all, and Classical figures normally display the blank, emotionless, ethereal countenance typical of the Parthenon sculptures (for pictures of a range of childhood gestures, see Szasz 1978). In general, then, the pictures of individual children are idealized, although a child’s lot in many cases is not a good one, as exemplified by the many images of children in danger. Similarly, artistic conventions and the limitations placed on the artists by them may well explain why some of the poses so popular in the Classical period, such as crawling children, are not normally rendered in Archaic art.

The images also provide pictures of various aspects of child life mentioned in the literary sources, as well as some not mentioned, thereby adding to our knowledge of ancient childhood. For example, the custom of the bride handling a young male child to help ensure offspring is known only in Attic vase painting (Oakley and Sinos 1993: 20). And the images of mythological children provide pictorial tableaux of stories, or versions of stories, both known and unknown in the ancient literary sources. The shepherd who rescued the baby Oedipus and who is shown on an Attic red-figure amphora by the Achilles Painter walking with the infant who clings to him for safety is named Euphorbos only on this vase, for example (Paris, Cab. des Méd. 372; Neils and Oakley 2003: 178, fig. 17). Thus, Greek art provides a rich source of information for the study of ancient childhood, one that all scholars can benefit from using for obtaining a broad picture of everyday life in ancient Greece.

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CHAPTER 8

CHILDREN AS LEARNERS AND PRODUCERS IN EARLY GREECE

SUSAN LANGDON

INTRODUCTION

MATERIAL evidence for childhood in Early Iron Age Greece (1000–700 BCE) is scattered and discontinuous. The young are least evident where they were once most visible, namely in the domestic realm, largely because house remains preserve so little material and remain underexamined. More informative are the relics of adult culture, placed in graves and sanctuaries, that were directed toward the young, particularly through ritual attention to their well-being and proper socialization. Children's own culture, the hand-made ephemera of their play and industry, is assumed to be long gone. Yet if we remember that children not only consumed material culture and its messages but also helped shape it, a good deal more evidence can come into play.

Comparative testimonia for children in early Greece locate the Early Iron Age between the sparseness of the Late Bronze Age and the expanding body of monumental and textual resources of the archaic period. Mycenaean children can be glimpsed within a family context: included in family burial structures; protected in death by terracotta figurines; and, according to palace archives, given workers' rations alongside their parents (Olsen 1998; Rutter 2003). Nevertheless, they rarely appear in art, a fact that says more about the Mycenaean use of imagery than about the value of children (see Oakley in this volume). The formulaic infant-in-arms of terracotta *kourotrophoi*, for example, underscores what otherwise appears to be a lack of public interest in human fertility and motherhood common in patriarchal Bronze Age societies, where status was connected with paternity rather than maternity (Budin 2011).

By Archaic times (600–480 BCE), infants and young children are represented mainly in grave assemblages, mourning scenes, and, rarely, small terracotta figurines. These limited representations of the very young are far overshadowed by a focus on the adolescent male found in painted symposium pottery and monumental *kouros* statuary.

It is particularly telling that the *korai*, statues of young women, lack the same wide dispersal as *kouroi* and therefore belong to more localized cultural patterns. The popularity of depictions of young men can be linked to the importance of the *oikos* in Archaic society, not as a familial unit but as an “elite male sociopolitical power base” (Beaumont 2003: 65). The importance of the man-to-be suppressed the status and visibility of those who are not yet, or never will be, in sight of that goal. Significantly, the rare Archaic depictions of infants and children tend to be limited to the minor or cheaper arts such as small terracotta plaques, figurines, and painted vases (Beaumont 2003: 61; see also Oakley in this volume). Research on children and childhood in the Greek world has steadily increased since two important studies by Mark Golden and Robert Garland appeared in 1990. What is still needed is a clear separation of Archaic and Classical evidence.¹

The need for chronological context throws into higher relief the challenges of articulating children in the Early Iron Age. Relevant studies have largely dealt with burial demographics, the ages and locations of child burials, and their relation to the larger population. The growing presence of child graves among adult burials in Athens has been tied to the rise of the polis, as evidence of the increased political symbolism of the *oikos* unit (Morris 1987; Houby-Nielsen 2000). Both the inclusion of children among adults and the development of child cemeteries in Athens and elsewhere attest consensus on public recognition of personhood relative to the community. Burial assemblages offer insight into adult experience and perceptions of children (Houby-Nielsen 1995; Xagorari 1996; Oakley 2003). Age-linked burial goods and ritual objects reveal stages of gendering and strategies of socializing encoded within the broader scope of material culture (Langdon 2007, 2008, forthcoming).

Apart from these newer studies that address the presence of younger community members, Early Iron Age scholarship has focused on the period’s warrior culture and developments leading to the rise of the polis as a fundamental political institution. Children are thoroughly neglected in these considerations yet must have played significant roles in bringing the fledgling poleis to cultural maturity, if for no other reason than that they made up a considerable part of these early communities. Rapidly growing populations in eighth-century Greece would have produced proportionately more children with each successive birth cohort. With infant and early childhood mortality remaining relatively high, a greater proportion of the “total person-years” of a population would have been lived in childhood (Chamberlain 1997: 249; see also Parkin in this volume). Some estimates reach well above 30–40% of the living population under eighteen at any given time (Lucy 2005: 48–50). Such communities had every reason to invest their material culture heavily in the interests of nurturing children and socializing rising adults

¹ The documentary wealth for the archaic period can be glimpsed in the catalog for the 2003 exhibition *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece: Images of Childhood from the Classical Past* and the accompanying symposium papers published as *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy* (Neils and Oakley 2003; Cohen and Rutter 2007).

and would have begun the process early. Moreover, the producers of this material will have included children, whether engaged in the daily routines of domestic life or learning more specialized crafts alongside family members.

This practical approach can be set within a broader framework of age-appropriate participation in culture. Anthropological studies suggest that the concept of socialization, conceived of as adult-directed teaching of group norms and values to a passive cohort of young recipients, is an inadequate explanatory model for cultural transmission. Rather, the specialized cognitive skills of children that underlie their innate ability to learn (as opposed to adults' more conscious and less reliable ability to teach) establish the success of cultural reproduction as the child's achievement, a view that is rarely considered. This perspective provides context for the suggestion that "the singular architecture of children's minds" makes culture possible (Hirschfeld 2002: 616). From an archeological standpoint, our evidence is limited to the end products of changing or abiding cultural elements. The standard assumption that adults in a society "owned" the means of cultural reproduction has implications for the way we account for cultural change. As it "overestimates the influence adults actually wield" (p. 614), it also negates the creative structures and random factors that children introduce as they acquire knowledge, which in turn influence adult thinking.

This essay considers the importance of children as learners and participants in cultural reproduction through the evidence of ritual material. I focus on evidence from the eighth and seventh centuries BCE as a period of significant change. Within the specialized craft traditions of Geometric pottery and bronze work, the development from abstract ornamentation into distinctive figural styles and the elaboration of specific forms of votive offerings and grave gifts closely parallel the emergence of new social, political, and religious institutions. Placing young apprentices into these developments provides a new way of seeing how knowledge and technology were transmitted, how learning environments affected innovation and conservatism—in essence, how the nascent city-states were built not only from the top down but also from the bottom up.

CHILDREN AS PRODUCERS OF RITUAL MATERIAL

Modern Western constructions of children as physical and social dependents have overlooked their role as agents in the domestic and economic production of ancient families and communities. Yet if a child is to become an effective member of a production community, training in appropriate motor skills, technical knowledge, and design structures needs to begin early. Participating in an established and actively developing iconographic system also requires a theoretical understanding of the craft purposes and traditions. This perspective underscores the unusually high level of manual precision and abstract conceptualization required to make fine Geometric art. Painted pottery of

ca. 900 to 700 BCE features linear decoration that aims for almost machine-like precision and order; natural subjects are broken down conceptually into abstract parts. The decades between 750 and 700 saw a rapid development of iconography, with new thematic elements added to a stable set of visual and organizational principles. Massive creations like the large Dipylon grave markers and the “Cesnola krater” were painstakingly strategized and measured (Figure 8.1). The expansion of the industry through the last decades of the eighth century into more workshops, smaller vessels, and often “lesser” productions still required the same basic set of skills. The investment of learning time implied by these theoretical principles and technical skills was more plausibly begun in childhood than in intensive adult apprenticeship. Accordingly, products made by children are likely present in most categories of art, and indeed, all of material culture that was made in the household.

Logical as this theory may appear, there are clear challenges to investigating child production, the most important of which are setting objective criteria and locating potential material. While determining whether “substandard” work comes from a learner or a careless expert involves a certain amount of subjective judgment, more



FIGURE 8.1 “Cesnola krater.” Euboean Late Geometric krater, ht. 114.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.965). (Image: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

difficult still is distinguishing between the hands of young and adult learners. Tested theoretical approaches are required to investigate these categories. Also problematic is finding potential child products to begin with. Since most of the extant Geometric material is preserved in the ritual contexts of graves and sanctuaries, the archeological record is quite likely to be skewed to more successful (i.e., expert-produced) works. Publications are also prone to bias. If a work looks amateurish, it has less chance of being illustrated or even published, particularly from a pottery-rich site or context for which only a representative sample is presented. In his publication of the Argive Heraion pottery, Waldstein described a group of miniature vessels as “simply the examples of the low level to which the potter’s trade could sink” (Waldstein 1905: 101). This kind of disparaging comment is actually quite helpful—as a sort of “rhetoric of concealment” it signals potential child work to explore. Child-produced efforts might be expected in kiln refuse or be confused with slapdash draw-pieces (e.g., Papadopoulos 2003: 253, fig. 4.23, C19; 254, fig. 4.24, C25–C27).

First, however, an investigation into such apprenticeship must be grounded in an understanding of how production of fine pottery and other specialized crafts was organized. The evidence for Geometric fineware production suggests more variability than a single model describes. At the upper end are large grave markers and grave pottery of the sort associated with the Dipylon workshop, which seem to correlate with aspects of both the “nucleated workshops” and “estate production” models described for Roman pottery by D. P. S. Peacock (1982). In both categories technology is progressive, products are standardized, and production is a mostly male enterprise. The specialized vessels and decorative elements of Geometric “masterpieces” were restricted to an elite clientele to whom the potters may have been attached as dependents. Lower on the scale, pottery production ranges from nucleated workshops, grouped together in industrial areas such as the potters’ quarters that may have begun at Athens and Corinth in the Early Iron Age, to household production. Pottery manufacture was integrated into the seasonal rhythm of agricultural life. Also, while some workshops may have operated above household level, visual and literary evidence from the archaic and classical periods suggests a long tradition that involved family members, particularly fathers and sons (e.g., Plat., *Rep.* 421, 467; Arafat and Morgan 1989: 314–29; Papadopoulos 1997, 2003; Crielaard 1999: 52–8).

It is difficult at first glance to distinguish the careless work of an expert from the inept effort of a child or even an adult learner. Certain types of incompetency, however, result from underdeveloped motor and cognitive skills. Ethnographic studies from the American Southwest and Cameroon provide archeologists with criteria by which ancient child-produced pottery might be recognized. These include miniature and small scales, irregular wall thickness, unintentional asymmetry, manufacturing errors (e.g., drying cracks), omission of traditional steps in construction or decoration, awkward brush handling, irregular and inefficient line work (including frequent lifting up and touching of the brush to the surface), substandard conceptualization or execution of design, and juvenile fingerprints (summarized in Table 8.1; based on Crown 2001, 2002; Kamp 2001; Wallaert-Pêtre 2001; Bagwell 2002).

Table 8.1. Traits of skilled potters/painters compared with traits of child potters

Skilled potters/painters	Child potters/painters
Symmetry	Problems with symmetry
Versatility in scale	Small scale
Standard forming techniques	Non-standard forming techniques
Even wall thickness	Uneven wall thickness, thick walls
Higher quality materials	Lower quality materials
Successful firing technique	Firing problems
Standard-size paintbrush	Finger-painting, changes in brush size
Efficiently applied paint	Inefficient painting
Effective overall composition	Problems in planning and spacing
Traditional motifs	Poor understanding of motif concept

Child-produced work is strongly conditioned by the type of learning environment in which skills are acquired (Schiffer and Skibo 1987). An adult who provides verbal direction and corrects errors while the child works (i.e., highly scaffolded instruction or developmentally sensitive guidance) will help the child produce a more expert-looking vessel than a child who learns by watching and imitation. Children who are allowed to use trial-and-error methods or are guided by older children may introduce a more random and innovative dynamic into a tradition (DeBoer 1990; Greenfield 2000). Such learning environments can be assessed in archeological material through close comparison of unskilled work with the contemporary work of highly skilled artisans (Crown 2001, 2002; Wallaert-Pêtre 2001). Despite the different effects that culturally specific teaching methods might foster, there are universal developmental stages in the acquisition of cognitive and motor skills. A study of Shipibo-Conibo girls of the Peruvian Amazon basin learning to create textiles and pottery (whose complex design motifs have much in common with the meanders and abstract grammatical structure of Geometric Greek design) shows that the distinctive stylistic properties begin to be grasped at around age five and are fully mastered by fifteen or sixteen (DeBoer 1990: 88), a pattern that correlates with the majority of non-state pottery-producing societies in the Human Relations Area Files (Crown 2001: 455). In fact, cross-cultural studies have found that most child producers master the basic characteristics of their group's style by seven to nine years, and naturalistic proportions of figures (in cultures that value realism) can be achieved by eight to twelve years (Brown 1975; DeBoer 1990: 87, fig. 9.3 B–D by seven-year-olds, 90, table 9.1; Crown 2001: 457 with further references;). Many ceramic skills advance considerably around the nine- to eleven-year mark (Bagwell 2002). In one set of tests, skills in two-dimensional drawing were found to develop earlier than those in three-dimensional arts, although since only American children were tested this lag might reflect cultural emphasis rather than cognitive maturity (Brown

1975). Measurements of ceramic skill show that the gap with adult achievement levels closes around age sixteen (Bagwell 2002). Motor skills specific to the craft technologies will be acquired quite young in children brought up within a production environment, to an extent that an adult novice cannot readily achieve (Maynard, Greenfield, and Childs 1999). Add to these observations the family or father-son focus of early Greek craft specialization, and it may be readily understood why beginners' work seems to be rare in the archeological record.

For Greek pottery we have few additional resources from which to create a theoretical framework. Classical period schoolboys may seem a poor guide to craftsman-apprentice interactions, but they provide a direct source for ancient Greek teaching methods. Pupils were taught to write and read by retracing the lines of letters incised in wax and rote recitation of word lists and memorized texts. As Golden (1990: 65) notes, it is an educational method "tailor-made to stifle originality and self-expression" (see also Muir 1984). One might readily object that such ordered mimicry, perfectly suited to the educational goal of preparing aristocratic youths to take on the roles of citizenship, is hardly relevant to the potter sensitive to the evolving demands of his market. Yet if the purpose of creating crafts for ritual use is to adhere closely to socially prescribed forms, then the analogy for the workshop may not be far off the mark. More to the point, as analogy for teaching boys the art of war Plato cites the practice by which "sons of potters look on as helpers a long time before they put their hands to the clay" (*Rep.* 467a). While we might wonder how plausible this suspended participation was in a bustling workshop, Plato's observation method may apply to some of the more risk-taking aspects of pottery making, such as the decoration of larger pots and the throwing and firing of closed shapes that could endanger the entire contents of the kiln. In any case, his description falls into line with the more controlled approach of observation and imitation that yields relatively conservative results.

The potential benefits of considering the perspective of young learners in early Greek communities can be demonstrated by examples from two categories of artifacts, pottery and bronze figurines, that may have been produced by young novices. I focus on unusually small to miniature scale vessels as a starting point, not because small scale is an infallible indicator or children were so limited but because it is a common cross-cultural characteristic of child work and offers the richest vein of unskilled ancient creations. To the Greeks, "learning pottery on a big jar" was proverbial for making a beginner's mistake (Plat., *Lach.* 187b; *Gorg.* 514e). In more recent contexts, it has been demonstrated that modern children produce better artwork on smaller pieces of paper (Kellogg 1970: 260).

Starting in the eighth century BCE and increasing in the seventh, miniature vessels became popular dedications at sanctuaries and were given by the hundreds, even thousands, especially at shrines of Artemis and Hera. Although miniature vessels are commonly considered cheap substitutes for "better" votive offerings, they were clearly established within official cult material appropriate to routine worship or festival occasions (Ekroth 2003). Most were locally made and competent, often fine in quality. Although an expert potter might dash off small vessels with less than customary care,



FIGURE 8.2 Miniature vessels from the Artemis sanctuary, Eretria. (Courtesy Sandrine Huber.)

many of these have specific qualities that fit the criteria for work by subadult hands. At the Artemis shrine at Eretria, worshippers dedicated special classes of locally made three-handled water jars (*hydriai*) and high-necked pitchers, in some cases decorated with figures (Huber 2003: pl. 28). A number of these are both exceptionally small to tiny in scale and strikingly unskilled in appearance: the decorative zone is filled with irregular solid bands or simple series of not-quite-parallel lines (Figure 8.2; see also Huber 2003: pl. 79, H 197, pl. 80, H 209, 223, 228). The walls are thicker in proportion to vessel height and painted lines are uneven in width and spacing, both hallmarks of underdeveloped motor skills. The simple linear decoration is entirely at variance with the more adroitly formed specimens that commonly feature figural designs. Several examples show poor-quality painting on competent pots, suggesting that an adult made the pot and let a child decorate it (e.g., Figure 8.2, C 48; Huber 2003: pl. 80, H 208). In other cases both the unevenly formed vessel and the awkward painting suggest that it is entirely a child's effort, although she might have had help attaching the handles (e.g., Figure 8.2, H 224, H 227; Huber 2003: pl. 80, H 228, pl. 100 C 44, C 46, C 49).

These little pots may have special significance at this site. Votive offerings and iconography suggest that Artemis was worshipped here as a kourotrophic goddess with a special connection with women and girls. Her cult likely served as the female complement to the adjacent sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros, patron deity of Eretria. Among the votive offerings to Artemis are dolls, hair spirals, weaving equipment (loom weights, spindle whorls, a thigh protector or *epinetron*), jewelry, and images of branch-carrying maiden processions (Huber 2003; Langdon 2008: chapter 3). Several vessels depict ritual activities, including a young girl standing among women offering textiles, perhaps a robe for the goddess (Huber 2003: pl. 28, C 41). The large number of *hydriai* suggests that libation or water-carrying rituals were an important component of worship at this streamside sanctuary. It seems likely that women worshippers were involved in producing the special ware for this cult and were including their children as well.

Miniature votives from sanctuaries of Hera at the Argive Heraion and Perachora, like those from the Eretria shrine, show the close dependence of unskilled specimens

on specific shapes used within the cults, particularly the ceramic basket or *kalathos*, as well as conventional decorative organization and motifs, suggesting an instruction style of close adult supervision aimed toward maintaining ritual and artistic traditions. The bottoms of two *kalathoi* from Perachora show a rabbit skillfully painted on one and on the other the same idea rendered in a wobbly short-legged dachshund-shaped version, perhaps a deer (Figure 8.3, nos. 857, 2702; Dunbabin 1962: pl. 23). A *kalathos* with flaring rim has animal bands of extremely simple style, stiff-legged sticks with undifferentiated heads (Figure 8.3, no. 858; *ibid.*). Difficulties in planning include their placement well above the ground line and accidental close spacing that leaves no room for an animal's tail or the following animal's head. On a crudely formed little *kalathos* the painter has attempted to show different animals in the manner of Corinthian animal style, resulting in giant, jerkily incised eyes, a line added to augment the belly of a skinny grazing deer, and an unidentifiable elephant-shaped quadruped, but the painstaking effort to follow design convention is apparent. The unusual approach of painting this tiny pot upside down may have offered a novice more stability for bracing a hand while holding a brush (Figure 8.4; *ibid.*: pl. 35). Small cups (ht. ca. 5.5 cm or less) painted with upside-down figures also occur in the Argive Heraion (Waldstein 1905: 151–2, nos. 90, 91) and the

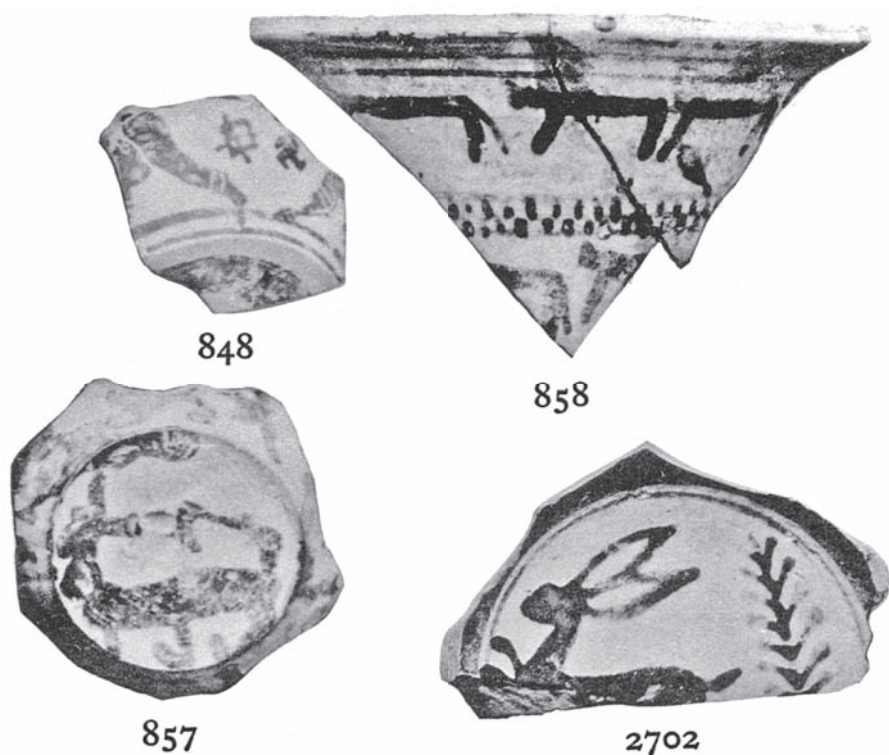


FIGURE 8.3 Fragments of miniature *kalathoi* from the Sanctuary of Hera Akraia at Perachora. (Courtesy Trustees of the British School of Archaeology.)



771

FIGURE 8.4 Miniature *kalathos* no. 771 from the Sanctuary of Hera Akraia at Perachora. (Courtesy Trustees of the British School of Archaeology.)



2047

FIGURE 8.5 Trefoil mouth *oinochoe* fragment no. 2047 from the Sanctuary of Hera Akraia at Perachora. (Courtesy Trustees of the British School of Archaeology.)

potters' quarter at Corinth (e.g., Stillwell and Benson 1984: pl. 52, 1264, 1265, pl. 73, 2065 partially upside down).

Some of the more challenging vessel forms like trefoil-mouthed jars (*oinochoai*) appear to have been formed by expert hands but decorated by an apprentice with under-developed motor skills. On a well-formed trefoil *oinochoe*, the painter was learning the Corinthian animal style with silhouettes (Figure 8.5; Dunbabin 1962: pl. 85, no. 2047). Other fragments suggest a beginner venturing into the difficult and risky technique

of incising details, the hallmark of Corinthian style. Where Thomas Dunbabin noted the animals on one specimen as showing an “uncertain nature, with childish incision which observe neither the natural forms nor the usual conventions” (p. 21), we might instead see the details—eyes incised on the animals’ feet—as playful in a literally childish manner (Figure 8.6; Dunbabin 1963: pl. 3, no. 81a–b). Dunbabin’s “childish” reference seems to have been meant as disparaging, as throughout his text he uses similar judgmental descriptors, like “splodgy,” “boneless,” “wooden,” and “very bad style.” On a few examples he suggests the possibility of “amateur” (meaning apprentice?) work but never addresses the implications of very bad style among ceramics dedicated in a sanctuary. Most of the unskilled work shows a determined adherence to convention, yet a few examples betray freer imagination. A tiny, solid, and completely nonfunctional two-handed pot from the Argive Heraion, for example, has no connection to local vase types (Waldstein 1905: 101, fig. 41).

If correctly interpreted as child’s work, these unskilled vessels dedicated along with other votive offerings attest a clear concern with integrating children into the religious life of the community (see Garland in this volume). These three sanctuaries are among the earliest to develop a cultic focus on protecting the young and recognizing maturation. Like the Artemis sanctuary at Eretria, figured vessels at Perachora include scenes in which women and children together appear in cult activities on flasks and *pyxides* (ceramic lidded boxes), shapes associated with women (Dunbabin 1962: pl. 77, nos. 1783, 1951). These “Frauenfest” vessels, as they are called, are found mainly in sanctuaries of Artemis and Demeter, both kourotrophic goddesses (Jucker 1963: pl. 17, 1–6, pl. 20, 2, pl. 23, 1; see also Oakley in this

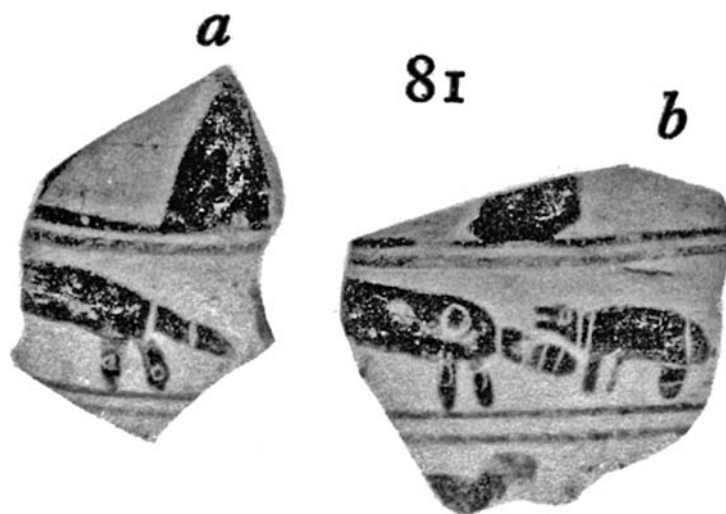


FIGURE 8.6 *Aryballos* fragments no. 81a, b from the Sanctuary of Hera Akraia at Perachora. (Courtesy Trustees of the British School of Archaeology.)

volume). The evidence of child production underscores the creation of new polis institutions that addressed the socialization and protection of the young in urban and extraurban cults.

Another promising context for locating child-related pottery is juvenile graves, where small and miniature pots were common gifts. Archeologists often accept miniature vessels as appropriate grave goods for children without closer examination while at the same time assuming that similar miniatures in sanctuaries represent “poorer” or cheaper votive offerings (Dunbabin 1962: 290; Ekroth 2003). Depending on context, diminutive objects might be seen to represent toys and child-scale versions of items through which children can be socialized into gender-appropriate tasks and behaviors (Kamp 2001: 436–7; Bagwell 2002: 104–7; Baxter 2005: 46–50). When miniature vessels in a child’s grave appear to have been made by immature hands, other factors need to be considered: they may represent the gifts of child mourners or perhaps the handiwork of the deceased. In Early Iron Age graves, these are mainly drinking vessels of various forms. A single small cup in a burial might be interpreted as the child’s own possession, but in many cases the very young age of the deceased or the quantity of cups included suggests their use by mourners in a graveside ritual. Burials in the Kerameikos cemetery and the Athenian Agora display a strong correlation between children’s graves and pottery that was plausibly made by subadults, although the low value accorded such work by scholars has left them in a state of invisibility. A Late Geometric pithos burial of a two-month-old infant in the Athenian Agora illustrates the point (Agora grave D 16:3, Thompson 1950: 330–1, pl. 104). Among his or her fine grave pots are three that were decorated with birds in panels: an exceptionally fine high-rimmed *skyphos* bowl (Brann 1962: 67, pl. 18, no. 319); and two small cups, a miniature *skyphos* (ibid.: pl. 21, no. 368) and a *kantharos* (high-handled cup), which carry weaker versions of the same well-established design (Figure 8.7, on block, right foreground, and adjacent left, respectively). The miniature bird *skyphos* no. 368 (ht. 41 cm) is fully conventional in form and decoration, but its horizontal and vertical bands are noticeably unsteady and painted with too thick a brush; the handles are set asymmetrically. The little drinking vessel does not fare well in the published commentary: “In the same deposit with 319, it shows that the finest and the worst painting was done at the same time” (Brann 1962: 72). The little *kantharos* from the grave, with its poorly smoothed surface, wobbly lines, and clumsy boat-like forms, was not acknowledged or even given a catalog entry in the Agora publication.

It is quite probable that two nearly identical miniature Attic bird *skyphoi* in Heidelberg, without context, came from child graves. Although cataloged as coming from (i.e., exported to) Thebes and Andros, respectively, they are nearly identical in size and immature painting techniques to the Agora bird *skyphos* no. 368 (CVA Heidelberg 3, pl. 113, 2 and 3; see remarks in the foreword on the unreliability of the dealer provenances). Brann (1962) unconvincingly equated the “lower style” of bird *skyphos* no. 368 with a hypothetical workshop, and although she suggested that it was made by an apprentice she also attributed chronological value to its crudeness and dated it later by several decades than the “flawless” bowl no. 319 (pp. 17, 72 under 367).

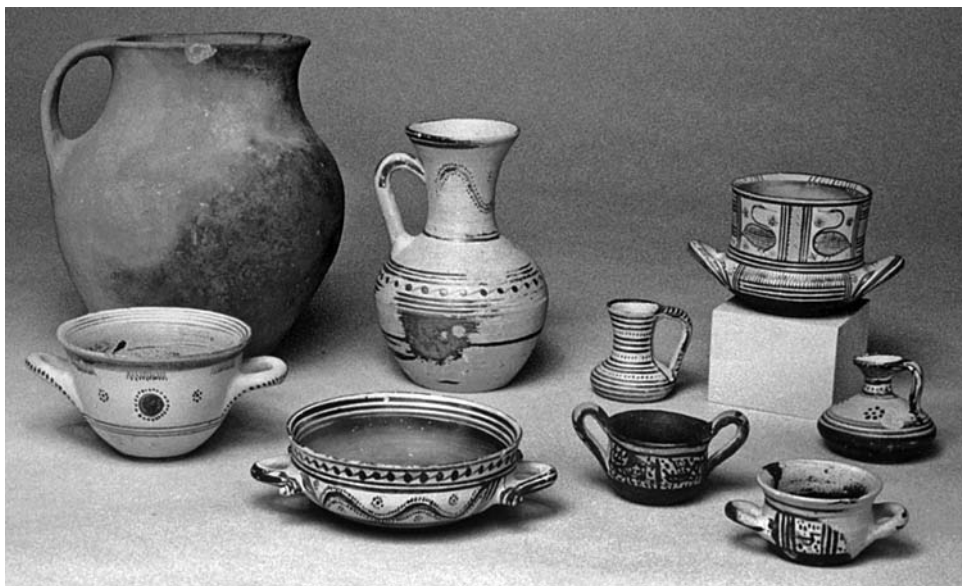


FIGURE 8.7 Infant burial assemblage from the Athenian Agora, D 16:3. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.)

The Kerameikos cemetery has yielded a number of small and miniature vessels made with apparent motor skill difficulties, all coming from child burials. Geometric child grave 49, although disturbed, was rich in goods, including three *kantharoi*, three *kalathoi*, an *oinochoe*, two high-rimmed bowls, three *askoi* (baggy closed vessels, two with birds' feet), a bronze bracelet, an iron knife, and many fragments of more small vessels. One of the *kantharoi* stands apart from the others at half their size and displaying distinctly inept bands and dots, likely created by a novice potter (Kübler 1954: 242–3, pl. 88, inv. 1345). As with the specimen from the Agora grave, such miniature *kantharoi* are a distinctive feature of child burials (ibid.: 29, pl. 88). Excavations during the construction of the Athens subway uncovered several child burials in the vicinity of the Kerameikos station (Parlama and Stampolidis 2001: 265–74). One of these, grave 152, contained among its pottery offerings a small cup painted with a unique scene of two ships, each populated with a smiling crew painted in outline (Parlama and Stampolidis 2001: 286, no. 267). The casual, even humorous sketchiness may represent the offhand whim of an adult potter, and the cup itself is well-formed. Yet several details, including mistakes, a nonregular painting technique, and motor coordination difficulties, suggest the decoration was child's work. The boats are depicted backward and unevenly spaced around the cup, the number of rowers and oars do not match up, the rays are shaky with drips accumulating at their points, and small vertical strokes around the rim are irregular and overlap the framing line. Moreover, the cup was painted upside down, an unusual approach that we have previously seen on pottery with childlike decoration (cf. Figure 8.4). The cup belongs to the class known as Phaleron ware after the child

cemetery where the pottery style was first identified (Young 1942). The simple ware is closely associated with child burials at a time of population crisis in Attica.

It is not clear how the presence of this possibly child-produced pottery in child graves should be interpreted. Were they the child's own possessions or specially made as grave gifts? It is significant that the Athenian Agora and the Kerameikos burials are located in potters' quarters where craftsmen's families likely resided. Some apprentice pots might have been the deceased child's own handiwork. Unfortunately, for many of the graves, particularly in the Kerameikos, no aging was done on the bones. In cases where the deceased was very young, these little gifts might have come from siblings and young friends. A fuller study of this phenomenon would investigate the age of the deceased and compare child graves at other sites to see how often the presence of a potters' quarter is a factor in the presence of child-produced works in graves.

Miniature clay pots are not so difficult to imagine in connection with children; Geometric bronze votive figurines are another matter. Spreading across Greece from the tenth to eighth centuries, this special class of offering appears so nearly exclusive to sanctuaries that it is held to be a significant marker of early ritual activity. The high value of bronze and the typology of figurines, featuring warriors, horses, cattle, chariots, and imitations of Near Eastern models, connect these offerings to the competitive votive display and self-promotion of elite worshippers (Langdon 1999). The best of these sculptures can reach a conceptual and technical sophistication that place them among the masterpieces of Greek art. At the other end of the scale are extremely awkward and crudely formed figures that were also cast in costly bronze. These include not just mis-casts but also figures with ill-proportioned parts, mismatched limbs, exaggerated or completely absent features, puffy heads, and stumpy legs (Figure 8.8). There are horses



FIGURE 8.8 Bronze votive figurine of a horse from Olympia, B 8260. (Photograph: DAI-ATH-Olympia 1969/748.)

that look like dogs, humans that look like teddy bears, sheep that resemble anteaters. These occur in particularly large numbers at Olympia, where thousands of Geometric votive figurines were both produced and dedicated at the sanctuary (Heilmeyer 1979). The most artless or inept examples have been explained in various ways: they were produced quickly for large festival-going crowds unconcerned with style or polish; they represent the earlier productions at the site, a sort of “childhood of the craft”; or they represent “caricatures” with intentional comical effects (Furtwängler 1890; Heilmeyer 1979: 170–7; Rolley 1983: 50–4). In general, they have been dated early or characterized as simply “Geometric,” since their style cannot be tied to stratigraphy or to pottery sequences.

The possibility that at least some of these awkward figurines represent the products of young learners—the childhood of the maker rather than of the craft—raises certain difficulties and may seem unnecessary. The figurines’ simple hand-modeled forms float free of dating sequences and therefore of sanctuary histories. The large numbers of finished, unfinished, and miscast figurines, especially animals, suggest a stream of votives that were produced en masse for specific events in the festival calendar. A bronze worker in this era was presumably casting from scraps or ingots on a seasonal basis brought by the worshippers or supplied by the sanctuary’s governing board for occasional festivals rather than producing an inventory throughout the year and thus might have been under pressure to work fast and with relatively little care.

The question of child participation in the votive bronze tradition is nevertheless worth considering if only because it is plausible and raises new considerations. For bronze sculpture as for monumental Geometric pottery, the skills took years to master. Not only were figurines produced singly as simple wax models encased in clay, but technical studies also show that Geometric bronzes could be cast by direct lost-wax, indirect lost-wax, and piece-mold methods, sometimes in multiple figures at a single pour (Bol 1985; Jones 1995). Signs of metalworking have been found in domestic contexts, but Geometric bronze figurine production debris is attested only in sanctuaries, most notably Olympia. We know little of the social organization of such production and whether it resided within household or kin groups where family members learned by imitation or through more formal instruction and apprenticeship within a workshop structure. While the latter concept may be overly formalized for the Early Iron Age, the dependency of bronze votive production on the needs, resources, and traffic in sanctuaries suggests that the model of a family-based production may also fall short of reality. If men dominated the production of fine metal votive offerings, as is generally assumed, it is likely that boys (especially sons) and young men assisted with auxiliary jobs in the *chaîne opératoire*, collecting fuel and bronze scraps, preparing wax, molds, and crucibles, tending the fire, and eventually making their initial wax and clay figures.

The child learner, much like his teacher, would have rolled and pinched the material into a figure, sometimes adding parts or incising details. Ethnographic studies of clay figures made by children, as well as comparison with archeological specimens

preserving children's fingerprints, offer observable characteristics of child production, including lumpiness, unfinished surfaces, lack of detail, disproportionate or asymmetrical parts, and failure of attachments (Kamp 2001). Children have an apparently natural tendency to form clay figures through an additive rather than a subtractive technique (Brown 1975), although an apprentice might be guided to whatever method was necessary to produce the correct form. Kathryn Kamp's (2001) study of child-produced figurines among the Northern Sinagua of Arizona (1100–1250 CE) in Lizard Man Village involved pieces that were likely produced as toys, suggesting that adult guidance may have been minimal and creative freedom maximal. She also noted, however, that such playthings had an added value in familiarizing these future potters with the properties of clay. By contrast, in Greece the figurines were the goal, and the results were expected to conform to established types and representational norms. Nevertheless, the close similarity between some of Kamp's Sinagua animal figurines carrying child fingerprints and bronze bulls from Olympia dated by style to the ninth century BCE should give us pause (e.g., Kamp 2001: 435, fig. 4d; cf. Heilmeyer 1979: pl. 14, nos. 80, 84). It should be noted that figurines and other small clay items were also made in the potters' quarters in both Corinth and the Athenian Agora (Papadopoulos 2003: 217–9).

A number of figurines from Olympia were conceivably cast from wax models formed by subadult hands. In two examples illustrated here, the rather crude forms reveal an attempt to imitate an established type but fall short through failure to conceptualize the steps required to achieve it; casting errors are also present (Olympia Br 2282+Br 9950; Figure 8.9). Similar in many respects to this last figure, standing male Br 6364 (Figure 8.10, left) features a simple cylindrical body with short splayed legs with stubby feet bent forward and notched for toes, a large genital lump with some effort



FIGURE 8.9 Bronze votive figurine of standing male from Olympia, Br 2282 + Br 9950. (Photograph DAI-ATH-Olympia neg. 1968/695.)

at detailing, and heavy buttocks. Nearly vestigial arms slant down unevenly from the neck with no indication of shoulders; one hand has finger notches. The large head preserves the remains of the casting gate on top, pinched ears and nose, indented eyes and mouth, and a distinct chin. Casting errors include ridges of excess metal overflow on the torso, truncated arms, and bubbles on the back. Despite the poor overall quality, what is important is the amount of detail, even aspiration in the piece. It can be compared to the well-executed Br 9500 (Figure 8.10, right), which looks quite different in its larger scale and flexed-knee vitality but reflects the same type: gate remnants show it was also cast from the head. It shares large pinched ears, facial features, chin; arms turned forward by postcasting hammering, heavy buttocks, detailed genitals, and feet bent forward. Unsurprisingly, the former (Br 6364) has been dated earlier by a century or more by several scholars, although the amount of anatomical and facial detail contradicts any discrepancy (Furtwängler 1890; Jones 1995). If the signs of casting errors can be connected with lack of experience, it is also notable that few of the Olympia animals published to illustrate miscasting or unobscured working marks were going to be visual successes (Heilmeyer 1979: pls. 2–6).

As noted already, there are many drawbacks to complicating an already complex subject by adding theoretical child producers, not least of which is the degree of subjectivity of the approach. Yet there is much to be gained by including children. Introducing the learner factor clearly sets a cat among the chronological pigeons. The relative dating of Geometric bronze figurines is loosely structured on connections to vase painting, bronze tripods, and terracotta figurines, onto which an abstract stylistic progression is overlaid. If the most awkwardly conceived and poorly proportioned figurines can no longer be unquestioningly assigned to the beginnings of the tradition or to its very end,



FIGURE 8.10 Geometric bronze votive figurines of standing males from Olympia: Br 6364 (left), Br 9500 (right). (After Furtwängler 1890: pl. XV, nos. 235, 238.)

this does nothing to help chronological sequencing and even raises new questions about workshop designations, evidence for earliest ritual activity, and possibly regional craft representation. Certainly not all the substandard productions or even many of the published figurine corpus were child produced. The simple style resulting from pinching and rolling soft wax or clay was standard among bronze and terracotta figurines everywhere as the most readily produced and least risky technique. While the most highly stylized, sophisticated Geometric silhouette horses and complex three-dimensional group designs have been placed at the culmination of a long period of development, it is more likely that their makers represented an elite but small number of artisans whose influence trickled down to others. Their more spectacular works would have been produced for special clients or occasions, while ordinary festival goers snapped up the less finely produced votives cranked out by the artisan and his younger assistants. Many of these issues may be ultimately unsolvable, but chronological considerations need to take into account what must have been a steady stream of novice work that in a relatively short span reached the level of the expert. A quicker pulse of change, with unsophisticated pieces continually entering the flow, makes it difficult to distinguish a linear stylistic sequencing through time.

CHILDREN, TRADITION, AND INNOVATION

Seeing children as the passive recipients of cultural knowledge exaggerates the control adults had over the process and underestimates the creative and necessary role of the expert learners. Considering the involvement of children in the production



FIGURE 8.11 Design on shoulder and belly of miniature jug from the Argive Heraion. (After Waldstein 1905: 91, fig. 20, pl. LXVI.1.)

of material culture addresses on a smaller scale their role in larger cultural transformation. Two final examples illustrate the possible implications of granting children such agency. The first example demonstrates how children emerge as an important source of innovation. New figurine types and figural iconography may have come from cult leaders, the requests of worshippers and mourners, inspiration of the expert bronze caster, and eye-catching foreign imports. But children's fresh views, attention to environmental cues, and more tenuous attachment to tradition make them natural agents of change. A miniature jug excavated beside the Argive Heraion temple may capture such a moment of vision. The painter apparently noticed that his spiky men standing in oared boats, when turned upside down on the shoulder, become striding animals (Figure 8.11; Waldstein 1905: 91, fig. 20, pl. LXVI.1). This could certainly have been an adult painter's trick, but the sketchy, jagged quality of the drawing and the small scale suggest the playful, fresh discovery of a child, who might have been learning to paint by turning his pots upside down. It is significant that the objects considered in this essay all belong to specialized crafts created for ritual contexts: bronze votive offerings, pottery dedicated to gods, gifts for the dead. As such, their makers are situated at the heart not just of play or even of economic life but also of their communities' means of dealing with incomprehensible forces of the divine and the natural.

A second case brings up the implications for other cultural advances. A loom weight with an *abecedarium* incised on one worn face was found in late eighth- to early seventh-century well debris in the Athenian Agora (Figure 8.12; Lang 1976: 7, A1, pl. 1). A rudimentary sketch of a horseman was carved into an adjacent face. Poorly fired pottery fragments found together with it in the well strongly suggest that the fill, as in other wells nearby, includes discards from a potter's workshop, where loom weights, spindle whorls, figurines, and other small domestic clay items were also made (Papadopoulos 2003: 188, 217–9). Added after the loom weight was fired,



FIGURE 8.12 Horseman and *abecedarium* incised on two sides of a loom weight. Drawings of Agora MC 907. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.)

the inscription recalls the close association between the earliest Greek writing and pottery, sherds being the nearest equivalent to scrap paper and pottery carrying the vast bulk of eighth- and seventh-century writing. Anyone might have picked up the loom weight and scratched in the letters and horseman. Yet its congruence of worn, homey object, painstaking but poor letters, and little horseman doodle suggests the labor of a child as readily as that of an adult. The point is that new technologies, literacy included, can be successful only to the extent that they can be learned and reproduced by the rising generations.

Novice works situate the young as producers of mainstream material culture, closely connected with social and religious messages. Explanations for cultural transformation in early Greece must allow agency to children as physical, changing entities, acting on the material world and acted upon, recipients and shapers of culture, learning side by side with adults, their products and traces coming ever closer together. Seeing children as partners in this effort enriches our understanding of social change in early Greece.

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CHAPTER 9

SHIFTING GENDER: AGE AND SOCIAL STATUS AS MODIFIERS OF CHILDHOOD GENDER IN ANCIENT ATHENS

LESLEY A. BEAUMONT

INTRODUCTION

In her book on the *Archaeology of Childhood*, Jane Eva Baxter (2005: 111) observes that “lifelong roles, particularly gender roles, are taught during childhood through the process of socialization and create a powerful, reciprocal link between the study of gender and the study of childhood.”¹ The very fact that gender as a cultural construct is taught and learned during the early years of life thus requires that engendering of the young involve a nonstatic, malleable category of social identity capable, like the child itself, of development and change (Sofaer Derevenski 1997a). In this chapter I focus on an investigation of the shifting gender profile of the growing child in fifth-century BCE Athens. In particular, my discussion examines how this gender profile was modified, and impacted, by the variables of age and social status.

But before launching into a discussion of the engendering of childhood in classical Athens, I begin by briefly defining the concepts of *gender*, *age*, and *social status* as they will be employed throughout this chapter. I also pause to consider how, from

¹ A shorter version of this paper was first presented at the first annual conference of the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past, held at Magdalen College Oxford in September 2007. I am grateful to the Society for its invitation and also for the financial assistance with travel costs provided both by the Society and by the University of Sydney, which granted me leave to attend the conference.

a methodological perspective, we may attempt to throw light on the construction of childhood gender in the past.

The term *gender* I use in the widely accepted sense of the assignment to individuals of a culturally defined and culturally specific male or female social identity, which may or may not be linked to the individual's biological sex. Gender may involve not only a binary opposition of male or female but also various permutations of both male and female or alternatively gender-neutral identity. By *age* I mean life stage, that is, the ancient Athenian division of the juvenile life course into a number of socially recognized phases. Though this, as we shall see, was linked to biological age and physical development, it was not determined by a rigid observance of chronological age, a situation that contrasts markedly with our modern Western reliance on the precise calculation of the length of time since an individual's birth to assign him or her a place in the social matrix (Baxter 2005: 23; Beaumont 2012: 17–24). *Social status* is a term I employ to describe the social role occupied by the individual at a given point in his or her subadult life course. For example, the adolescent girl on attaining puberty would take on the literal and metaphorical mantle of the *parthenos*, that is, the status of marriageable maidenhood, in which capacity she would, among other things, serve the gods and her city as a sacrificial basket bearer on the occasion of religious festivals, wearing a special cloak that clearly designated her particular status (Roccos 1995, 2000; see also Garland in this volume).

For the purposes of this chapter I do not include here considerations of socioeconomic class, though I recognize that variations in this would without doubt have impacted on the child's gendered experience and perception by Athenian society. Slave children would not, for example, have undergone the same engendering process as free children born to Athenian citizen families. But rather than analyzing this dichotomy, my present discussion focuses on the modification of gender via the passage of the freeborn Athenian child and youth through an unfolding sequence of culturally appropriate roles, each of which changed his or her status in the social fabric of Athenian society. At Athens there existed a very close relationship between subadult age or life stage and the associated culturally appropriate social role or status to be attained and exhibited, and it is the effects of this nexus on the child's shifting gender identity that I aim to examine here.

How methodologically we may attempt to achieve this end requires consideration. In dealing with fifth-century Athens, we are fortunate to possess a number of ancient literary texts that can shed light on the subject matter under investigation. These, however, are not without their problems and limitations (Golden 1990: xv–xvii). No ancient Greek author wrote a social history of childhood, and the surviving ancient references we have to children by the almost exclusively male authors tend to be largely incidental; this state of affairs clearly reflects both the male gender bias of the educated Athenian classes and the perception of children as not being appropriate subject matter for the world of public discourse. Nevertheless, children do figure in a number of ancient law court speeches and also in the works of the ancient philosophers and playwrights, though care is needed here in the treatment of authors whose frequent intent was not to provide a mirror image of Athenian society but rather to advocate how life *should* be lived or to provide audiences with a dramatic, often exaggerated, foil to the day-to-day

experience of the Athenian citizen. In addition to the primary literary sources, we also have the evidence of ancient material culture. Highly informative for our purposes is funerary archeology, where the surviving interments of individuals who had died at widely varying ages in the subadult and adult life stages allow us to examine gender expression in the burial record and also to determine how this gendered expression was affected by the life stage reached by the individual at death (Houby-Nielsen 1995; Sofaer Derevenski 1997b). Our investigation of the shifting nature of childhood gender may also be informed by a study of relevant iconography (Beaumont 2012). In the case of fifth century Athens, we are fortunate to be able to explore a wealth of images, both two- and three-dimensional, which possess the capacity to illuminate the ancient construction of gender as it applied to the numerous juvenile and mature life stages. In this paper, then, it is these archeological and ancient textual sources of evidence on which I intend to draw. I further recognize the potential of ethnographic parallel for a study such as this, though it is not a methodology that I presently incorporate.

As already stated, childhood is a time when gender roles are taught and learned, a time when socially acceptable adult gender identity is in the making. It is, therefore, important for us briefly to consider the framework of fifth-century Athenian gender ideology and the gender roles the individual would be required to play when he or she reached maturity (cf., e.g., Dover 1974: 98–102). The freeborn Athenian adult male citizen was characterized as active, capable of restraint and self-control both emotionally and physically, and possessed of full mental faculties. His life was lived mainly in the public sphere as an agent of political democracy, as a warrior, and as a fully developed social persona. In addition, he was expected to take on the roles of husband and father as head of his own household and to govern the economic wealth and survival of that social unit. By contrast, the freeborn Athenian adult female was characterized as passive, incapable of restraint and self-control in both emotional and physical matters, and possessed of only limited mental faculties. Her life was lived mainly in the private sphere as wife, mother, and industrious keeper of the household's day-to-day operations. Her social persona was given public expression only in the realm of religious celebration and ritual observance.

Such were the male and female gendered profiles to be displayed on arrival at adulthood, and the childhood journey toward this destination involved a gradual acquisition of appropriate gender traits. In this sense time was, to use a phrase coined by Roberta Gilchrist, "the gender clock" (Gilchrist 1999: 79): in this case, a clock whose divisions of time were determined by the Athenian view of the subadult years as composed of a number of social and biological developmental stages. The significance for many societies of such age stages in the social accomplishment of gender has been rightly stressed by Joanna Sofaer Derevenski, who points out that modern scholars have tended to ignore this as a result of their own embeddedness in contemporary Western culture, which regards childhood as a phase of life undifferentiated by rites of passage or initiation rituals, and views "all sub-adults as children" (Sofaer Derevenski 1997c: 198).

To reconstruct the relevant age stages that comprised an Athenian childhood, we may turn to the evidence of the iconographical sources and of funerary archeology. Here my

own previous work has demonstrated that classical Athenian iconography allows us to identify four subadult life stages: infancy from birth to the third year; young childhood from infancy to around the seventh year; older childhood from around the seventh year to puberty; and adolescence, which began with the onset of puberty (Beaumont 1994: 81–96; 2012: 37–42). Sanne Houby-Nielsen (1995) also reached similar conclusions based on the study of funerary evidence: in her analysis of subadult graves in the Athenian Kerameikos cemetery, she was able to make distinctions between the treatment of infants up to one year old, of young children ranging from one to between three and four years, and of children ranging from three and four to twelve years (pp. 129–91). She also noted the difficulty of distinguishing the graves of adolescents, that is, of individuals older than about twelve, from those of adults. Both studies on iconography and funerary archeology furthermore indicate that childhood gender was neither static nor defined necessarily by biological sex but was, rather, a fluid category of identity, determined and redetermined by the shifting social impact of age on biological sex. At birth the sex of the child was immediately recognized and publicly announced by hanging outside the door of the home the appropriate kind of wreath, olive for a boy and wool for a girl (Hesychius s.v. *stephanon ekpherein*), thus also foreshadowing the child's *future* gender potential as a male athletic victor or an industrious textile-producing wife. The infant itself, however, was apparently accorded a gender-neutral status. This is suggested, as Houby-Nielsen pointed out, by the lack of gender-specific offerings in the graves of children who died in early childhood. This contrasts markedly with the graves of older children, ranging from around the third year of life to puberty, in which gender-specific objects such as weapons and athletic equipment for boys or wool-working equipment, mirrors, and cosmetics and their containers for girls appear in increasing numbers (Houby-Nielsen 1995: 129–91, 2000: 153–5).

If infancy, then, was regarded as gender neutral, at what stage of childhood did the engendering of the life course begin? The evidence suggests this had begun by the child's third year and was well under way by the age of seven. Indications of early genderization are provided not only by the funerary evidence but also by the iconographical sources. While both male and female infants may be depicted as naked figures, from the third year onward the girl's body is consistently hidden beneath a long or short dress, a state of affairs that contrasts with the boy's frequently continuing presentation as a nude figure. From around the age of seven, however, when his formal education began outside the home, the boy also begins to be regularly depicted as modestly draped beneath the folds of a cloak (Beaumont 2012: 32–4).

ENGENDERING THE ATHENIAN GIRL

Once the engendering of the female had begun, it progressed throughout her growing years at a much more intense rate than was the case for her male counterpart, until reaching its culmination in the threefold equation of menarche, marriage, and childbirth.

Since each step of this equation ideally followed in rapid succession, and also since it was childbirth within marriage that was considered by Athenian society to bring to an end the girl's own childhood and adolescence and to convey upon her the status of an adult woman, the female's full genderization was thus often achieved only a year or two after the onset of puberty. During her childhood years there were two main arenas in which she learned how to become a woman: the domestic sphere and the world of religious ritual. While the boy's lifeway took him beyond the walls of his family home from his seventh year to be educated in literacy, music, and athletics, the girl's life remained centered in the home with her mother and other female relatives and servants where she learned from them the skills and knowledge she would require in her future life as a wife and mother. At the same time, Athenian religion provided her with an external framework for social maturation via passage through a number of religious rituals that functioned as an active agent of her genderization and prepared her for puberty and its consequences. What would seem to be the main sequence of prepuberty rituals ideally experienced by an Athenian girl of well-to-do citizen family status is listed by the late fifth-century playwright Aristophanes in his play, the *Lysistrata* lines 641–7 (see also Garland in this volume):

As soon as I was seven I was an *arrhephoros*. Then at ten I was an *aletris* for the foundress, and shedding my saffron robe I was an *arktos* (bear) at the Brauronia. And once I carried a sacred basket, a fine girl wearing a chain of figs. (trans. M. Golden)

Here Aristophanes tells us that at the age of seven the girl took on the role of an *arrhephoros*, in which guise she was required to carry certain mysterious objects under cover of darkness from the sanctuary of the virgin goddess Athena Polias down the rocky slopes of the Acropolis, perhaps to the sanctuary of Aphrodite, the divine embodiment of sexual love. In this case the ritualized journey between the two cult places may have served to foreshadow and symbolize the girl's own future transition from virginity to sexualized womanhood. As an *arrhephoros* it was also the girl's duty to begin the weaving of a special robe for the statue of Athena Polias, thus ritually paralleling the domestic role that she would later play as a wife in the production of textiles for her family (Beaumont 2012: 170–4). Similarly her cultic persona as an *aletris*, which Aristophanes identifies her reaching at age ten, again in the service of Athena, involved the testing of her developing domestic skills via the grinding of grain for a sacred cake that was offered to the goddess.

Two further cult roles for girls are identified by Aristophanes, that of *arktos* and of *kanephoros*. The Arkteia festival, held in honor of another virgin goddess, Artemis, was celebrated by Athenian females between the ages of five and ten (Beaumont 2012: 174–85). On this occasion, the girls took on the role of *arktoi*, or wild bears, by dressing in a special saffron robe that they then shed during the course of the ritual. This ritual may be interpreted on one hand as the symbolic taming of the wild girlhood state via the ritualized anticipation of puberty and the subsequent marriage that would civilize and socialize her. On the other hand it may also be viewed as an expiatory rite offered by

the girls to Artemis prior to the onset of menarche to placate and appease the virgin goddess for the inevitable future surrender of chastity that menarche swiftly followed by marriage would bring. The ritual role placed last in his list by Aristophanes is that of *kanephoros*, or sacrificial basket bearer in festival processions. Of the four ritual roles mentioned by the poet, this is the only one enacted by pubertal maidens, or *parthenoi*, rather than by prepubertal children.

As Arnold van Gennep (1909) pointed out a century ago in his seminal work *Les Rites de Passage*, physiological puberty and what he termed social puberty “are essentially different and only rarely converge” (van Gennep 1960: 65). In the case of the Athenian girl, the rituals just outlined clearly indicate that the foundations of social puberty were laid many years before the arrival at biological puberty. This, as we shall see, contrasted markedly with the experience of Athenian boys, for whom I will suggest that biological puberty generally preceded social puberty. It is also important to note that the engendering of the Athenian girl followed a linear route involving the increasing concentration of her female identity and was a relatively straightforward affair by comparison with the engendering of the Athenian boy, in whom as we shall see both male and female identities wove their threads throughout his developing years. Nevertheless, the socially required complete engendering of the girl was not without its perceived complications, and as she approached puberty she was regarded as entering a critical and potentially dangerous stage in terms both of her physical well-being and mental sanity. In this context a study by Joan Reilly (1997) of the ancient Hippocratic work *On the Diseases of Young Girls*, in association with her examination of late fifth and fourth-century BCE grave stelai depicting young Athenian females, persuasively posited that the appearance of a special kind of nude, anatomically correct adult female doll held in the hands of the relief sculpted girl figures gives expression to the ancient Greek fear that menarche might not be achieved and that madness would as a result ensue (pp. 154–73). Reilly proposes that these dolls, which have themselves been found made in terracotta and deposited in tombs and sanctuaries, were votive dedications offered by the girls and their families to ensure the safe passage of the female through menarche and thus, critically, to enable her to marry and produce a child and to take her proper place in adult society (on dolls, see also Harlow in this volume).

ENGENDERING ATHENIAN BOYS

Turning now to the Athenian boy, it is here that gender is seen to be most fluid and where male and female gender identities were perceived as coexistent. The boy’s life pathway took him from a genderless state at birth and infancy, via an older childhood stage of combined male and female traits, to an adolescent phase that gave heightened expression to his mixed gender profile. Only on attainment of adulthood were all his female characteristics perceived as being replaced by male, and only then did he achieve manhood socially as well as biologically. As in the case of the Athenian girl, the process of

engendering the boy seems to have begun around the third year, and Xenophon records that common social practice in the ancient Greek world was to place boys in the care of a *paidogogos*, or male caretaker, as soon as they could understand language (Xenophon *Lac. Pol.* 2.1). Thus, though the boy still shared the intimate domestic sphere with his mother and other female relatives, male influence was assured its place in his life from an early age via the daily presence of the *paidogogos* as well as the probably less regular dealings the boy had with his father.

This straddling by the young boy of the male and female spheres is well illustrated by a late sixth-century BCE black-figure plaque by the Sappho Painter, where the dead body of a young man lies on a bier surrounded by mourning family members (Figure 9.1; Paris, Louvre. Inv. no. MNB905; see also Oakley in this volume). Gathered immediately about the deceased are the female relatives, who include an older and a younger girl. To the left, and slightly removed from the corpse, are the male mourners who display more restrained gestures of grief than the women. A small boy is placed symbolically at the junction of male and female groups. Though standing with the men, who represent the locus of his future adult life, like the women he is unable to control his emotions and reaches out to clutch at the bier. His physical location in the scene, his behavior and his feminized gestures emphasize his mixed gender identity (McNiven 2007).

Another probable indicator of this mixed-gender identity is the white pigment applied to the flesh of some young boys in late classical Athenian pot painting (van Hoorn 1951: cat. nos. 437–9, 446–50; Ham 1999: 208). The addition of white paint had earlier been established in the black figure style as an iconographic convention used by artists to indicate the female gender. I would suggest, therefore, that its application to the painted figures of young boys as well as to those of young girls on late fifth- and early fourth-century BCE Athenian red-figure vases gave expression to the perceived coexistence of feminine alongside masculine traits in the person of the young Athenian boy. These similarities in the iconographic and, I would argue, the conceptual presentation at Athens of male children and of females, both young and old, call to mind the words of Nan Rothschild (2002) in discussing a culture far removed from that of the Greeks in time and space, namely, that of the prehistoric Puebloan Southwest, and demonstrate cross-cultural parallels in the gendering of the childhood stage: “Children, like women, exist at the weaker end of the dichotomized dimensions of male/female, adult/child. They are feminized in the sense of being other-than-male and other-than-powerful, and they exist in a category that includes the elderly, the enslaved, and other weak, muted, and marginalized groups” (p. 1). Male gender thus was not an identity synonymous with boyhood but was rather a status to be developed and attained during the course of the boy’s maturation process.

From the boy’s seventh year, male influence in his life increased through his interaction with the teachers who became responsible for his education in literacy, music, and athletics and generally for the development of the mental capabilities that were regarded by Athenian society as being peculiar to males (Beaumont 2012: 134–46; see also the chapters by Bloomer and Dillon in this volume). Importantly, this education introduced him to a wider world beyond the confines of his home and gave him the first taste of

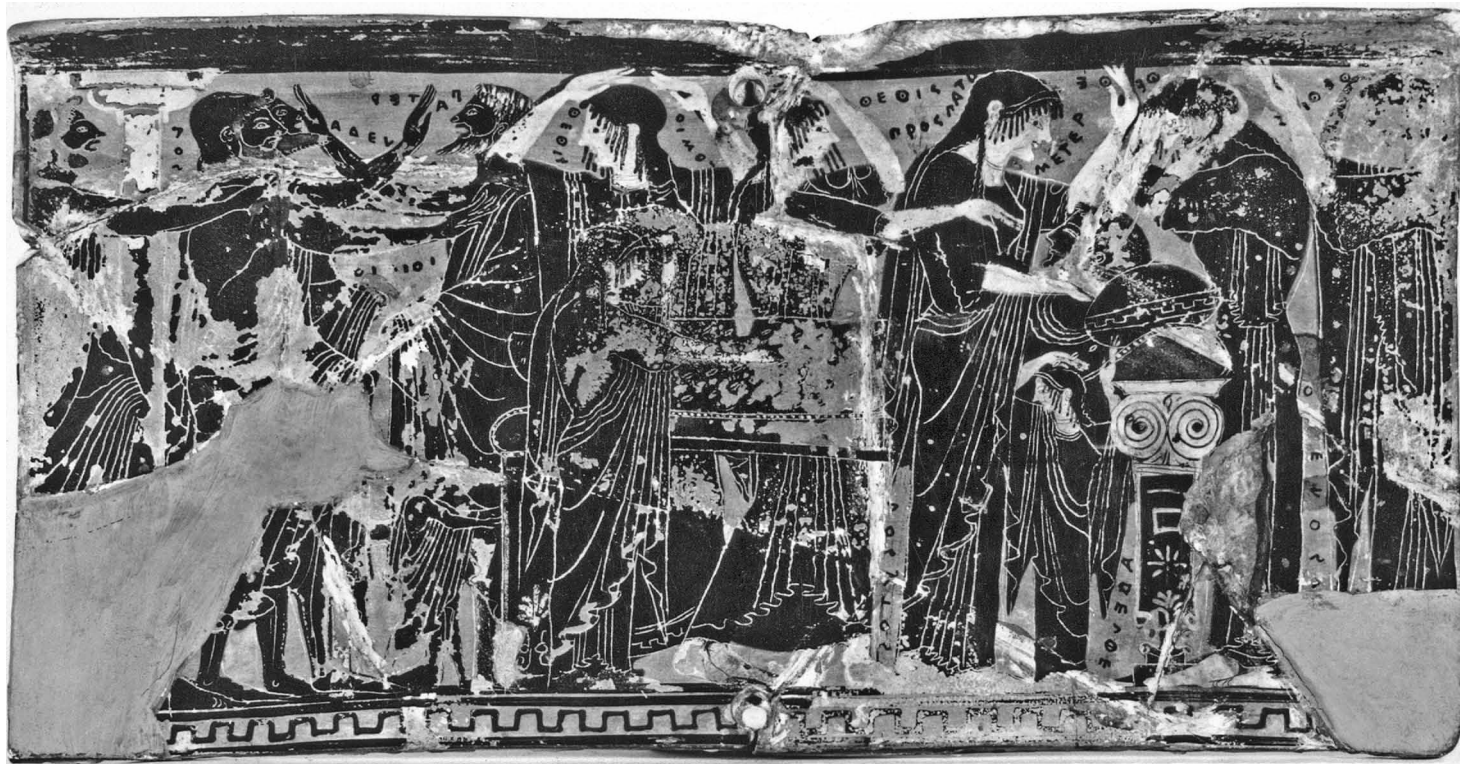


FIGURE 9.1 Family funeral. Attic black-figure plaque, Paris, Louvre MNB 905, Sappho Painter, ca 500–490 BCE. (Photo ©RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Hervé Lewandowski).

the public domain he would inhabit as a man. Nevertheless, in these years preceding puberty Athenian society continued to recognize the existence of female characteristics in the boy. This perception was based not least on the understanding that fully developed male gender status depended on the possession of active potency, both biological and social, and that since a boy was biologically impotent and socially dependent he could therefore be compared to a woman. Aristotle clearly sets out the shared inferiority of women and boys in his *Generation of Animals* (1.728a 17–21):

Now a boy is like a woman in form, and the woman is as it were an impotent male, for it is through a certain incapacity that the female is female, being incapable of concocting the nutriment in its last stage into semen. (trans. A. Platt)

Naturally, the onset of puberty meant that a boy now entered a new phase of his life in which his physiological potency gradually developed. Since, however, he had not yet come of age legally or socially, the adolescent years between the onset of puberty and his enfranchisement at age eighteen represented a liminal stage when the tension between his male and female persona became stronger. Further, even when his eighteenth year had been reached, the youth still seems not to have been regarded as a fully gendered adult male. This is indicated by the comments made by Aristotle that the male began to produce fertile sperm and thus became truly potent only at age twenty-one and that only then did the growth of a full beard appear as the hallmark of manhood (*History of Animals* 7.1.582a32–3).

The manifestation of the tension in the adolescent male's mixed gender identity is observable in a number of ways. First, it is clearly seen in the socially desirable pederastic relationship that was now formed between the youth and a mature adult male, a relationship that not only served to initiate the boy sexually but that was also considered to provide him with an adult male citizen role model outside his own family. The relationship was governed by strict social convention drawn along lines of marked inequality between the two partners. While the adult *erastes*, or lover, must actively court the boy with gifts, the adolescent *eromenos* must behave modestly and refrain from yielding too quickly to the older man's approaches. When the relationship was finally consummated, the boy was required to yield passively to his lover and ideally derive no sexual gratification himself. The pederastic relationship thus exhibited strong parallels with the heterosexual conjugal relationship, both of which were composed of mature adult male and passive young wife or adolescent youth (Porter 2003: 146–77). There was, however, one major difference: while the heterosexual relationship involved the penetration of the female, social controls governing the pederastic relationship legally forbade penetration of the youth, since this was equated with womanish or slavish behavior inappropriate to a future citizen of Athens (Dover 1978). The gender identity of the adolescent youth was thus positioned midway between that of male and female, reflecting his ambiguous and transitional social status.

Another manifestation of the crossing of gender boundaries by young males may be found in the ritual context of the Athenian Oscophoria festival. At this festival,

Athenian youths played a prominent part, two of them leading the procession from the sanctuary of Dionysus in Athens to the sanctuary of Athena Skiras in Phaleron and others participating in the festival foot races (Kadletz 1980: 363–71; Vidal Naquet 1986: 106–28). Notably, the two male youths who headed the procession engaged in transvestism by dressing as girls. While transvestism was not an unfamiliar feature of a number of other Dionysiac rituals (Bremmer 1992: 195–6; Miller 1999: 223–53), it is significant that in the Oscophoria those individuals chosen for cross-dressing were young males on the verge of manhood. While shortly, therefore, they would assume a fully gendered masculine identity, the Oscophoria festival gave public expression to their marked liminal position between juvenility and maturity and consequently between masculinity and femininity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is worth highlighting one or two points. In ancient Athens, young people, at ages we would consider today still to belong to childhood, were sexualized at an early stage as part of the genderization process. Furthermore, while the sexual life of male and female began roughly around the same chronological age, that is, shortly after puberty, the males at this stage were perceived as juvenile or adolescent in sharp contrast to the females who, already married and soon to produce a first child, had all but achieved mature social status. Consequently, to fit this tight schedule, social puberty for the female had long anticipated biological menarche, and female adolescence—the period between menarche and marriage—was a short-lived phase, readily defined according to clear changes in biological and social status. The boy, by contrast, claimed an extended adolescence that witnessed social puberty, in the form of the pederastic relationship, unfold in the wake of biological puberty. This extended adolescence ensured the male's full socialization and development as a public persona and permitted his gradual genderization as a man via a complex route of mixed gender identity. As I have previously observed elsewhere, the Athenian gender-specific cultural construction of adolescence is given visual expression in Athenian figured art of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Beaumont 2000). While for girls a clear iconographic type was developed for the representation of the short-lived pubescent phase, no such simple reading of the iconography of the adolescent male figure is possible since the mixed juvenile–mature and female–male characteristics perceived as being embodied in the person of the male youth resulted in a corresponding ambiguity of artistic visualization.

The properly achieved engendering of the individual in ancient Athens was fundamental to the maintenance and replication of stable adult society. Childhood was therefore a critical phase in the process of effecting and replicating socially appropriate gendered identity and ideology. Learning gender roles and behaviors was necessarily a process that unfolded over a period of years, during which time the mutability of gender was integral to full maturation.

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CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN IN ATHENIAN RELIGION

ROBERT GARLAND

INTRODUCTION

WE know more about children in relation to Greek religion in general and Athenian religion in particular than we do about any other aspect of their lives. Admittedly this is not saying much, since it is virtually impossible to investigate children in the ancient world in terms of their relationships with one another, with their parents, with their slaves, or with their teachers (see in general Derevenski 2000: 7–8). For lack of anything better, we see them through the eyes of adults. That said, Athenian children were prominent in religion not only because of the various functions they performed but also because of the rituals that were performed on their behalf. Burkert (1985: 260) in fact went so far as to state, “The formation of the rising generation appears almost the principal function of religion, where ritual concentrates on the introduction of adolescents into the world of adults.” The prominence of children was due to two main factors: first, their suitability as mediators between the human and divine spheres due to their ritual purity or *hagneia* premised upon their relative lack of exposure to sex, blood, and death; and second, parental anxiety about their vulnerability to illness, abduction, and injury due to the high incidence of infant and child mortality (see Parkin in this volume). Infants and children belonged to a specific category of the dead and were commemorated accordingly in the rituals of death and burial. They also featured in Athenian myth, a subject we shall turn to at the end of this survey.

It goes without saying that childhood is an elastic rather than an absolute concept that does not denote the same length of years in all human societies. This circumstance is complicated in the Greek case by the fact that there is no word that exactly corresponds to “adolescence.”¹ A further terminological problem is that the word *parthenos*, commonly translated “virgin,” was occasionally used of a girl who had borne a child

¹ See Beaumont 2000 for an illuminating discussion of the depiction of adolescence in Greek art.

(Sissa 1990: 342–3). For the purposes of this essay, I will identify as children all females up to and including those who have attained the age of marriage and all males up to and including those who have been identified as ephebes, in other words, those who have reached the age of puberty. In the case of Athens, however, this designation is complicated by the fact that “ephebe” came to be applied to a selective group of adolescent males, who in their eighteenth year began a two-year period of military training (see Casey in this volume). Though space does not permit me to offer a diachronic investigation of children in Athenian religion, it is important to note that their level of involvement is a reflection, if not a function, of a more general interest in children, which we should not assume to have remained constant over time.² We need to take into account that much of our data relates primarily to the children of the elite. We should also bear in mind that many of the religious rituals that the Athenians performed might well have been almost as obscure to them as they are baffling to us. The problem of interpretation is compounded by the fact that much of the literary testimony on which we rely, including that of Philostratus (late second–third century CE), Porphyry (third century CE), Hesychius (fifth century CE), Photius (ninth century CE), and the Suda (late tenth century CE) is extremely late.

CHILDBIRTH AND POSTPARTUM RITUALS

In a society where the risks to both mother and child were extremely high—perhaps as high as 25% in each case—it was essential to perform religious rituals to safeguard not only the reproductive capacity of the mother but also the health of the child. For this reason, *parthenoi* made offerings to the virgin Artemis, a notoriously vengeful deity, on the eve of their marriage, during pregnancy, and at childbirth (Dillon 2002: 19–23; Linders 1972). Fourth-century BCE inventories compiled by the treasurers of Artemis Brauronia indicate that it was customary for mothers to dedicate the garment they had worn at the time of delivery to the goddess’ sanctuary on the Acropolis (*IG II²* 1514–31; Garland 1990: 84). The principal deity who presided at the moment of birth was Eileithyia, the worship of whom dates as far back as the Mycenaean period. Her name is thought to be a corrupt form of “Eleuthyia” (She who comes). Eileithyia is understood to be the personification of a safe and speedy delivery, invoked by both parturient and midwife (Call. *Anth. Pal.* 6.146; Dillon 2002: 230–1; Parker 2006: 428, 430–1). Another birthing deity was Genetyllis (often invoked in the plural form Genetyllides), a diminutive of *genetê* (birth), who was closely associated with Aphrodite (Parker 2006: 432–3).

Rituals were performed in the home of the parents on the fifth, seventh, tenth, and fortieth days after delivery. If, however, the child was stillborn or died soon

² It may be the case, as Mikalson (1998: 199) argued, that in the Hellenistic period children came to assume a more important role in religion than they had done in the preceding classical period.

after birth, no religious ceremony was performed on his behalf. If he was born deformed, it was customary to expose him, partly because the birth of such a “monster” (*teras*) was seen as punishment from the gods for the breaking of an oath (e.g., Tod, *GHI* II 204.39–45; *SEG* XVIII 561.7; Garland 2010: 59–61; see also the chapters by Laes and Evans Grubbs in this volume). It is highly improbable that any religious ceremony was performed on behalf of children who, for whatever reason, were exposed.

It was probably on the fifth day after birth that a ceremony known as the Amphi-dromia was held, marking the “official” inclusion of the newborn into the family. As Aristotle (*HA* 7.588a 8–10) suggested, the few days’ delay may have been a response to the high level of infant mortality—highest of all, of course, in the first days after birth (see also Parkin in this volume). If this was the case, the psychological involvement of the parents with their newborn child might have been limited until the latter had demonstrated its fitness to survive. Very likely, too, this was the first occasion that the newborn left the *gunaikeion* or women’s quarters, in which till now it had been confined with its mother and, in a well-to-do household, its nurse. As the name of the ceremony, which means “a walking or running around,” suggests, the infant was carried around the hearth, perhaps at a trot, either by the women who delivered it or by the father (Garland 1990: 93 with note ad loc. for full list of testimonia). It seems that the purpose of the Amphi-dromia was to place the infant under the protection of Hestia, goddess of the hearth. It probably culminated with a sacrifice performed as a thank offering to the gods (Ephippus in *CAF* II: 251.3).

Either now, or perhaps at a later ceremony held on the seventh day after birth, relatives and friends brought gifts called *opteria*. As the name suggests, these gifts commemorated the fact that the infant was for the first time “seen” and presented to those outside its immediate family. Then at a tenth-day ceremony known as *dekate* or “tenth” the baby was given its name. A firstborn boy would be given the same name as his paternal grandfather. The *dekate* is likely to have been a more formal occasion than the Amphi-dromia, since it was now that the father publicly acknowledged the newborn to be his legitimate offspring. It ended with an “all-night” celebration known as a *pannuchis*, which was accompanied by much dancing (Euboulos in *PCG* v F2; Hesych. s.v. *dekaten thuomenon*; Sud. s.v. *dekaten hestiasai*, *dekateuein*). Finally, a source dating to the third century CE alludes to a joyous celebration called *tessarakostaion*, which was presumably held on the fortieth day after delivery to mark the end of the period of pollution (Censorinus, *DN* 11.7). Possibly, too, following ritual purification, the mother formally presented her newborn to Artemis, although the only evidence for this is a single relief sculpture dated to the late fourth century BCE found at Echinus, close to the Gulf of Malia (Archaeological Museum of Lamia inv. no. AE 1041; Cole 1998: 34–5; Dillon 2002: 231–3).

Whatever the exact sequence and number of postpartum rituals, they constituted an integrated series, whose purpose was to introduce the newborn to an ever-increasing circle, initially to members of the *oikos/oikia* (household or family) and later to members of the extended family and their friends, through the medium of gift giving and feasting.

Their other obvious function was to assist the child to survive the crisis of birth—the period in its life when it was most vulnerable. Although we do not know how extensively postpartum rites were practiced outside Attica, they are likely to have existed throughout the Greek-speaking world.

DIVINE PROTECTION OF THE GROWING CHILD

In appreciation of the many hazards that afflict a growing child, parents commonly placed their offspring under the protection of the *kourotrophoi* (fostering deities). Hesiod (*Th.* 346–8) claims that the progeny of Tethys, wife of Okeanos, included “the sacred race of *kourai* (girls), who in conjunction with lord Apollo and the rivers, transform *kouroi* into men (*kourizousi*), this being the role that Zeus has assigned them.” The Athenian deity most commonly accorded the title *kourotrophos* was Ge, who is often associated with other gods such as Artemis, Hera, Leto, and Apollo (Parker 2006: 426–39). The role of *kourotrophoi* no doubt commenced at birth, as we see from the fact that they were present at the birth of Zeus (*Str. Geog.* 10.3.11, 19). At what age in a young person’s life their role ended, however, is impossible to determine. The prevalence of cults in honor of *kourotrophoi* is compelling evidence of the high incidence of infant and child mortality, which prompted the entirely reasonable belief that adulthood could be attained only under the guardianship of a fostering deity.

Fear for the safety of children extended beyond religion to magic. A popular way to protect the newborn was to string a cord over the right shoulder and under the left arm, fitted with amulets or charms (*apotropaia*, *baskania*, etc.) in the form of pendants (Beaumont 2012: 61–3). As we see from depictions on small Athenian jugs called *choes*, children wore such charms till they reached the age of three or four. In some households nurses may have been expected to be skilled in magical practices to protect their wards against evil and the magic eye. Demeter’s attempt to immortalize the infant prince Demophon may be inspired in part by this aspect of their profession (*Hom. h. Dem.* 226–30).

rites of passage

The Greeks dramatized the transition from child to adult by rites of passage, whose purpose was to safeguard the young at moments of extreme danger in a sequence of enactments that involved first separation from an earlier phase of life, then liminality, and finally reintegration into society with enhanced status. These rites, more elaborate and better understood in the case of boys, punctuated the child’s passage from infancy to adulthood. They also served the purpose of initiating him, less evidently her,

into an ever-widening circle of communal associations, including *oikos/oikia*, phratry, deme, tribe, and polis, as the participant was introduced to the divine in its several and distinctive manifestations. Rites of passage also performed an important educational and civic function, as it was partly through this mechanism that children and adolescents came to comprehend the ways humans and gods interacted, and the obligations that they as adults owed to their gods. We should also bear in mind the possibility that rites of passage that have left no evidence in our records may also have taken place in the home.

Boys underwent rites of passage that were designed to introduce them to the community at large and to place them under the protection of the gods, as they progressed along the hazardous route from childhood to adulthood. Though girls also underwent rites of passage, it may be that fewer of them participated overall, consistent with their more limited civic and public roles. More frequently than boys, however, *parthenoi* fulfilled a variety of roles as officiates, acolytes, and, on a more casual basis, members of sacred choirs. To hold religious office, a *parthenos* had to be untainted by sexual intercourse and to remain free from contact with women in childbirth or the dead for the duration of her office. So far as our evidence allows us to determine, noble birth was a recommendation, if not a requirement.

Vulnerability and purity were the primary principles determining the roles performed by children in religion, coupled with the fact that the state depended for its future on the fertility of the rising generation. We should not, however, assume that vulnerability and purity were mutually exclusive in the Greek mind-set, and some rituals may have been intended to address both aspects of a child's identity. For this reason many rituals that on the surface lend themselves to being viewed as rites of passage may even primarily have been intended to benefit the community. Conversely, the holding of a religious office that was age-specific may also have functioned in part as a rite of passage. Despite this caveat, rite of passage remains a useful investigative tool, without which much of what was done in the name of Athenian religion would collapse into an incoherent mass of seemingly disconnected and meaningless details.

In their most developed form, rites of passage require that youths undergo temporary removal from the community to an uninhabited region, where they receive instruction in adult accomplishments. Typically, the youths are exposed to sexuality and violence, sometimes in the form of a violent sexual encounter. Other important elements include self-reliance, cultural regression, masquerade, and playacting. As noted earlier, however, we should not assume that all the rituals that we loosely categorize as rites of passage would have been so identified and interpreted by the Greeks.

Our understanding of this form of religious expression as practiced in historical times is extremely deficient. We know of no instance of a rite of passage that exactly conforms to the previously outlined model. The closest approximation is a bizarre Cretan ritual involving the abduction of a youth by an older man, as reported by the fourth century BCE historian Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 F 149 *ap. Str. Geog.* 10.4.21; Garland 1990: 174–8). From the tone of Ephorus' description, however, it seems abundantly clear that the rite had by his day become something of an antiquarian oddity. Though Ephorus' account is

problematic, it is nonetheless uniquely precious. It is also conceivable that in “advanced” communities like Athens, rituals that initially functioned as rites of passage came in time to lose much of their original significance. Another point to bear in mind is that rites of passage originally involving the entire rising generation of boys and girls may have been later performed by only a representative handful, chosen exclusively from those of aristocratic birth. It is conceivable that both these developments occurred in the case of the Arrhephoria, though there is no anthropological evidence to support this theory of “selective initiation.”

THE CHOES

The scholarly interpretation of rites of passage typically focuses on the transition from adolescence to adulthood. However, important transitional moments also occurred much earlier in children’s lives. The first such moment in the life of an Athenian boy took place, probably in his third year, at the Choes or “Pitchers,” the second day of the spring festival known as the Anthesteria, held in honor of Dionysus in the Marshes (Philostr. *Her.* 12.2.720; *IG II²* 1368.127–36; Parker 2006: 297–301; *ThesCRA* VI, pp. 41–5). Much is obscure, but it seems that the boy was crowned with a wreath and given a small pitcher or *chous*. He may also have tasted his first drops of wine, as many scholars have assumed, although we know of no other social context in which children drunk wine. It is unclear whether any other rituals were involved. Since, however, the ceremony marked his first encounter with one of the state’s major deities as well as his first introduction to his entire year-group or *heliakia*, we may be confident that it laid the cornerstone for the development of his civic, as opposed to merely familial identity. It has been suggested that a boy who died without having undergone this important rite of passage received in compensation a *chous* in his grave, perhaps because, in the words of a child’s epigraph, “a *daimon* had arrived in advance of the Choes” (*IG II²* 13139/42), but this attractive hypothesis remains a speculation.

Choes provide us with one of our best sources of information for the activities of small children because a very large percentage of them depict small chubby boys at play (see the chapter by Oakley in this volume). Ham’s (1999: 208) suggestion that the ritual “marked a transition from a state of being under the exclusive control of the women of the household into a semi-social status under the guardianship of a pedagogue” is persuasive but unproven. Besides, three years seems a very early age for a Greek child to be released from the “exclusive control” of its mother and nurse. The fact that *choes* have been found in Eretria and South Italy as well as in Athens (albeit limited to ca. 525–475 BCE) is testimony to the widespread importance of this rite. Though we do not know whether girls participated in the Choes, they are occasionally depicted on *choes*. It seems evident, however, that boys were the chief beneficiaries of the rite. As with other so-called rites of passage, however, we do not know whether all Athenian boys participated (see most recently Beaumont 2012: 69–84).

THE APATOURIA

The Choes is the only civic rite of passage known to us that occurred between birth and entry into adulthood at the *ephebeia* at age eighteen, to which future Athenian citizens were eligible. Other rites involving subdivisions of the citizen body did, however, take place. In Ionian communities including Athens, boys were introduced to what we might call their extended families on the occasion of Koureotis, the third day of the festival known as the Apatouria that was held annually in the autumn (Lambert 1993: 161–81; Parker 2006: 458–61 for full discussion of the testimonia; *ThesCRA* VI: 38–41). The boy's father or legal guardian introduced (the Greek verb is *eisagein*) his son to his phratry, that is, to a hereditary association of uncertain size. In the course of the ceremony he was required to take a solemn oath to the effect that the boy was “indeed the legitimate offspring of an Athenian woman who had been formally betrothed” (Isae. 8.19; Dem. 57.4; [Dem.] 59.60). If the claim was uncontested, his son was duly enrolled in the phratry, though it is unclear by what rite of initiation. Though most boys were introduced to their phratries before they were one year old, there does not seem to have been any upper age limit for registration. We do not know whether girls were required to be registered in a phratry, though we do hear of an *epikleros* or heiress who attended the Apatouria—presumably to be introduced to her phratry (Isae. 3.73).

Once his son had attained the age of fifteen or thereabouts, it is possible that his father or legal guardian reintroduced him to his phratry, this time to have him formally registered as a *phrator*. Admission was dependent on a vote from the members of the phratry acknowledging his legitimacy. The Koureotis takes its name from *koureion*, a word that denotes both the sacrifice which was performed on the initiate's behalf and, probably, by association with the verb *apokeiresthai*, the cutting of a young man's hair. It is likely that this action symbolized the end of a young person's growing years, since cutting the hair was believed to terminate growth. It may have been on this occasion, too, that Athenian youths performed a ritual known as the *oinisteria*, in accordance with which “they brought a measure of wine as an offering to Heracles, and, after pouring a libation to him, gave it to their companions” (Hsch. and Phot. s.v.; cf. Athen. *Deipn.* 11.494f). It has to be conceded, however, that there is no conclusive evidence for a two-stage process of introduction, and it is possible that introduction to one's phratry soon after birth was the conventional route to go.

THE EPHEBEIA

On attaining civic majority at the age of eighteen, a select band of Athenian youths, about five hundred in number, became identified as ephebes, though exactly how they were selected is unclear.³ They then underwent a period of military training and acculturation into civic values under the direction of an official known as a *kosmetes*

³ On the *ephebeia* in Hellenistic Athens, see the chapter by Casey in this volume.

(guardian of order). Although the institution, known as the ephebate, is likely to have been primarily military and civic in origin, it acquired a pronounced religious component as a result of the Lycurgan reforms around 338 BCE, since ephebes were now required (if they had not been required earlier) to initiate their training by making a formal tour of Athens' sanctuaries ([Arist.] *AP* 42.2–5; see Humphreys 1985: 206–8 for other possible religious rituals performed by ephebes in this period). Even before that, however, it had a religious aspect, as indicated for instance by the fact that ephebes competed in a race at the festival of the Oschophoria by carrying bunches of grapes known as *oschoi* on branches (Pi. F6c; see Hornblower 2004: 252–4). The number of ephebes subsequently decreased and thereafter fluctuated at around one hundred. After 229 BCE ephebes undertook an increasingly broad range of religious duties in connection with state cults such as the City Dionysia and the Eleusinian Mysteries. This seems to provide evidence of what Mikalson (1998: 292–3) has aptly termed the “youth movement” in Athenian religion—an allusion to the greater prominence of children, adolescents, and youths in late Hellenistic Athens, as evidenced, too, by inscriptions honoring them for the performance of religious duties (Mikalson 1998: 242–9; see also the chapter by Casey in this volume for a thorough discussion of the epigraphical testimonia).

MARKING THE TERMINATION OF GIRLHOOD

There is no evidence for a graduated series of initiations for girls, the probable reason being that they did not undergo any marked extension of their social persona until marriage. With the possible exception of the Arkteia, no rite of passage took place at the most important transitional moment in their childhood, namely, menarche. Even outside Athens, the evidence for female rites of passage is slight, and it may well be that the transition to womanhood was negotiated primarily in the home rather than in the community at large.

This may in part be due to the fact that the interval between menarche and marriage would often have been very brief, given the fact that it was common practice for girls to marry shortly after the onset of puberty—added to which marriage did not constitute any extension of their legal status since, instead of being some man's daughter or ward, the bride now became, in the eyes of the law, some other man's wife. Girls would make dedications to specific deities on attaining puberty, on undergoing marriage, and, as we have already seen, on giving birth. Toys and other childish possessions, locks of hair, and belts were the commonest dedications. A custom possibly unique to Sparta was the shearing of the bride's entire head by the *numpheutria* or attendant of the bride (Plu. *Lyc.* 15.5). Artemis, who was implacably hostile to sex and marriage, was the most favored object of devotion by girls in Athens. Outside Athens, Athena, Hera, Hippolytus, as well as a variety of heroized maidens were honored. Dedication seems to have been an entirely private act and, so far as we know, no public ritual accompanied it.

As we have already noted, the evidence for the performance of female rites of passage by a large number of adolescent girls anywhere in the Greek world is inconclusive. Zweig (1999: 158–80) argued that the first half of Euripides' *Helen* is a dramatization of Helen's passage from that of *parthenos* to bride. Very possibly more emphasis was placed on this transitional moment at Sparta than in Athens and elsewhere in the Greek world, but the argument is at best tenuous, based largely on allusions to ritual practice (see Kennell in this volume on female rites of passage in Sparta).

THE ARKTEIA

A vital piece of evidence relating to the participation of girls in state cult in Athens comes from a much-quoted passage in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, where the chorus of elderly women lists the several religious duties they performed in their childhood on behalf of the state (ll. 641–7; see also Beaumont in this volume):

As soon as I was in my seventh year I became an *arrhephoros*. Then in my tenth I was an *aletris* to the Archegetis. Then wearing a saffron robe (*krokotos*), I was a bear (*arktos*) at the festival of Artemis Brauronia. Next on becoming a beautiful *pais*, I performed the function of *kanephoros*, wearing a string of figs.

Brelich (1969: 229–311) took this to mean that all Athenian girls underwent four stages of initiation in their transition to womanhood in connection with the four-year cycle of the Panathenaia. This is highly unlikely, not least because later evidence indicates that most of these duties were confined to a small minority of the citizen body (Golden 1990: 46–7).

Of the four aforementioned rituals, that of “acting the bear” (*arkteuein*), which was performed at the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia at Brauron as well as at Mounychia and perhaps elsewhere in Attica, comes closest to functioning as a rite of passage. The name alludes to the fact that young girls or “bears” called *arktoi* performed ritual acts in a bear-like manner (*arkteuein*, *mimesasthai ten arkton*, etc.) as part of a festival known as the Arkteia. According to legend the consecration of young girls to Artemis was a necessary act of atonement for the killing by some Athenian youths of a sacred animal that had broken into the goddess's sanctuary. Although Artemis initially demanded the sacrifice of a virgin to avert a plague or drought, she was eventually deceived into accepting the sacrifice of a ram disguised as a she-bear. The Arkteia was hence explained as a reenactment of the substitute sacrifice performed in Artemis' honor. It may be that playing the bear in the service of Artemis was seen as a way of “soothing” or “appeasing” her before advancing to the service of Aphrodite, as later sources suggest (Lib. Or. 5.29; Sud. s.v. *arktos e Brauroniois*; schol. Theoc. 2.66; *ThesCRA* VI: 33–4 with full bibliography).

From the evidence of special-shaped vases called *krateriskoi* found at sites throughout Attica, including Brauron, Mounychia, and Halai Araphenides, from the late sixth to the end of the fifth century, it seems that *arktoi* performed rituals that included dancing, running toward an altar, holding garlands and torches, and sacrificing a goat. In many cases they appear naked. Many questions remain, however. We do not know the age of the *arktoi*, though from their position in Aristophanes' list they were likely to have been on the cusp of puberty. The length of time they resided in the sanctuary also goes unrecorded. Finally, we do not know what proportion of Athenian girls was consecrated to Artemis. If, as seems likely, the sanctuary charged for the service, only the well-to-do would have been able to participate. If so, it is possible that *krateriskoi* were dedicated by parents who, primarily for financial reasons, were unable to lodge their daughters in a sanctuary and enrolled them only as "day girls" (Parker 2006: 234–5).⁴

RITUALS PERFORMED BY *PARTHENOI*

The other three female roles to which the chorus in the *Lysistrata* alludes were probably all discharged on behalf of Athena Polias. According to the lexicographers, the *archon basileus*, the senior religious official, chose annually two (or possibly four) girls of noble birth aged seven to serve as *arrhephoroi* ("bearers of the sacred objects"; perhaps "bearers of the basket"). The girls resided on the Acropolis "not far from the temple of Athena Polias" (Paus. 1.27.3). It was their task (or at least the task of two of them) to set the warp for the working of Athena's sacred *peplos* or woolen dress on the occasion of the festival known as the Chalkeia. The Chalkeia was held in the month of Pyanepsion, nine months before the dress was presented to Athena at the Panathenaia. Their service terminated with an obscure nocturnal ceremony, in which they carried certain unspecified objects in a basket balanced on their heads to the shrine of Aphrodite in the gardens on the north side of the Acropolis, whence they returned similarly laden (for theories as to the meaning of the ritual and nature of their duties see Burkert 1983: 150–4; Robertson 1983; Brulé 1987: 79–98; Rosenzweig 2004: 56–8). We do not know what role may have been assigned to the other two *arrhephoroi*, if indeed there were two others. Some element of a rite of passage may perhaps be read into the fact that they began their period of service under the virgin goddess Athena and concluded it in the domain of Aphrodite (Burkert 1985: 264). Two young women who are depicted on the east frieze of the Parthenon carrying bundles on their heads, which they are in the act of delivering to a taller woman, are perhaps to be identified as *arrhephoroi* (BM inv. 115.161; Dillon 2002: 45–6). It was the duty of a child (whether male or female is

⁴ On *krateriskoi*, see also the chapters by Oakley and Kennell in this volume.

uncertain) either to present or receive Athena's *peplos*, the solemn action that is featured at the center of the frieze.

From 220/19 BCE onward there is a series of inscriptions honoring *errephoroi*—as they are called in this period—with a statue, evidence of the increased prominence of children in Athenian religion referred to already (e.g., *IG II²* 3461, 3465, 3470, 3473, 3488, 3497). Whether the *arrhephoroi* participated in the weaving of the *peplos*, as most scholars assume, is unclear. From 103/2 BCE onward, however, the institution seems to have been radically overhauled. Henceforth, some 100–150 girls of noble families served annually as *ergastinai*, who, as their name (“female workers”) indicates, were indisputably involved in the manufacturing of the *peplos*, at least in a nominal capacity. This phenomenon indicates that an increasing number of wealthy parents were now eager that their daughters acquire distinction through service to Athens' foremost deity (*IG II²* 1034; Brulé 1987: 100–5; Mikalson 1998: 256–8).

Very little is known of the ten-year-old *aletrides* (bakers or grinders) of the Archegetis (most likely a cult epithet of Artemis, or alternatively Despoina or Demeter), other than what Hesychius (s.v. *aletrides*; schol. *ad Lys.* 643) says about them: that they were nobly born, performed their seemingly menial task in connection with sacrificial cakes, and were provided with sacred querns for this purpose.

The fourth and final role that the chorus of women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* claims to have performed, presumably when they reached marriageable years, is that of *kane-phoros* or basket bearer. *Kanephoroi* surely served at the Panathenaia, even though no images of them are preserved on the frieze, as well as at other Athenian festivals and sacrifices. Their baskets contained three specific items: a sacrificial knife; the barley that was to be sprinkled on the sacrificial victim's head to make it “consent” by nodding in pretended agreement to the sacrifice; and the fillet with which it was adorned beforehand (Philochoros, *FGH* 328 F8; *Ar. Peace* 948; Thuc. 6.56.1; [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 18.2; *Arist. Pol.* 1311a36–39; Dillon 2000: 472–3; *ThesCRA* VI: 34–6). *Kanephoroi* were sufficiently important to receive their apportionment of meat from the sacrifice (*IG II²* 334.11–16, 335/4 BCE).

Thirty-one *parthenoi* are depicted on the east Parthenon frieze, conclusive proof of their prominence at the Panathenaia (Dillon 2000: 475–6). Some carry *oinochoai* and *phialai* containing wine, which they presumably poured either onto an altar or onto the ground as a libation preparatory to the sacrifice. Others bear a trumpet-shaped object that may have served as a *thumiaterion* or incense burner to perfume the air.

Parthenoi also participated in purificatory rituals connected with Athena at other times of the year. Two girls belonging to the *genos* or noble kin group known as the *Praxiergidai* were selected annually to serve as *loutrides* or *pluntrides* (*IG I³* 7; Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.12; Plu. *Alk.* 34.1; Hsch. and Phot. s.v. *loutrides*; Garland 1992: 100–2; Dillon 2002: 132–6). As their title, which means “washerwomen,” indicates, it was their duty to wash and purify the ancient olive wood image of Athena Polias at two rituals known as the Plynteria (Washing) and Kallynteria (Cleaning). In a separate annual festival devoted to Athena, ephebes purified in sea water another venerable statue of Athena known as the Palladion, so named because of her cult epithet Pallas,

before setting it up in the law court where crimes of homicide were tried (Burkert 1970: 356–68). No doubt there were other roles performed by *parthenoi*. Those depicted as caryatids on the Erechtheion's Porch of the Maidens, for instance, are known from Roman copies to have held *phialai*, though the precise nature of their role is unknown (Dillon 2000: 473–4).

Parthenoi also participated in women-only festivals that were celebrated in Attica, including the Haloa, the Skira, the Stenia, and the Thesmophoria (Ar. *Them.* 1150; Dillon 2000: 470). Athenian girls did not, so far as we know, receive any formal athletic training, and there were no games attached to festivals in which they participated, as there were in the case of their Dorian counterparts.⁵

CHILD OFFICIATES

Like many of the key terms that are applied from our religious systems to Greek religion, “priest” and “priestess” are problematic. We are certainly not entitled to assume that a person who is identified as a *hiereus* or *hiereia* was necessarily in a position of authority. At both Patrai and Aigeira the priestess of Artemis had to be a *parthenos* below marriageable years (Paus. 7.19.1; 7.26.5). At Aigion the priest of Zeus was originally chosen from “among the boys who won the beauty contest”—a title he held only until he began to sprout a beard, whereupon the honor passed to another boy (Paus. 7.24.4). There is, however, no evidence to indicate that an Athenian child was accorded the title of *hiereus* or *hiereia*.

A boy or girl known as a *pais aph'hestias* or hearth child, who functioned as an intermediary between those undergoing initiation and the divine (*to theion*), was elected annually by lot and then initiated at public expense into the Eleusinian Mysteries (Porph. *Abst.* 4.5). At a more mundane level children frequently worked as temple servants, probably under the direction of a sacristan or *zakoros*, who was responsible for the upkeep of a particular sanctuary.

It is likely, too, that a few Athenian children served as *paides amphithaleis* (“children blooming on both sides”), that is, those whose fathers and mothers were still alive (Poll. *Onomast.* 3.25; *ThesCRA* VI: 46). It was an *amphithales* who cut branches from the sacred olive trees out of which wreaths were fashioned for athletic victors at the Olympic Games; who at the festival of Pyanopsia carried the *eiresione*, a bough wreathed with wool and laden with objects that symbolized fruitfulness; and who at weddings accompanied the bride to her new home, wearing a crown made of thistles and oak leaves and carrying a winnowing basket full of bread. *Paides amphithaleis* were probably selected for these tasks partly because they had not yet been tainted by the pollution associated with death and partly because they embodied (literally) the fecundity that the duties

⁵ See further the chapters by Patterson and Kennell in this volume.

they performed were intended to secure. It may be, too, that they were regarded as endowed with divine favor, which made them the natural choice as a vehicle of communication between the human world and the divine (cf. Stengel s.v. *amphithaleis* in *RE* I.2 [1894] col. 1958). Similarly, parents who had been polluted by the death of one of their children were sometimes debarred from holding a priesthood or required to resign from office if they suffered the loss of a child (Paus. 4.12.6).

In addition, Athenian children probably received what we might describe today as religious instruction. Plato's *Laws* recommended that "children aged between three to six should periodically gather at village sanctuaries" (7.794a). He does not tell us what exactly the children should do there, but it is highly likely that they would have been inducted into religious lore, particularly as it pertained to the sanctuary in question. A little later he animadverts that young people should learn "enough about the gods of heaven so as to prevent them from blaspheming and to ensure that they always speak piously both when performing sacrifices and when at prayer" (7.821c–d). And later still he stipulates that "boys from the beginning until they are eligible for military service should be furnished with arms and horses at every festival procession in which a god is honored, and that their hymns to both gods and sons of gods should be accompanied by marching or dancing, whether quick or slow" (7.796c–d). Though we should not assume that Plato's recommendations are invariably inspired by Athenian practices, it is highly likely that the undertaking of religious duties was a key element in what passed for Athens' educational system. (See the chapter by Patterson in this volume on Plato's *Laws*.)

CHORUSES OF CHILDREN

Choruses of boys and girls regularly competed at festivals, often against their peers, that is, against those of their exact *homelikia* or age group. Xenophon of Ephesus (1.2.2 *Erotici Scriptores Graeci*, ed. R. Hercher, Leipzig: Teubner 1858), for instance, mentions a choir whose members were all aged sixteen, and Callimachus (*h. Artemis* 13) refers to a mythical choir of sixty Okeanids, all aged nine. For the most part choruses were composed of either boys or girls. Occasionally choirs of both boys and girls sang antiphonally, as at the Hyakinthia festival in Sparta. As was the case in Greek tragedy, dancing accompanied the singing, at least in the case of girls (Ar. *Lys.* 1296–1320).

In Athens, ten choruses of fifty boys apiece representing the ten Attic tribes competed in the dithyrambic choruses at the City Dionysia, and five choruses competed at the Thargelia, each representing two tribes (*IG* II² 1138.6, 11; [Arist.] *AP* 56.3; Antiph. 6.11). They also competed at the Hephaisteia and Prometheia (*IG* II² 1138.11). On the day of the Koureotis boys divided into their respective tribes and chanted poetry, including the works of the lawgiver Solon (Pl. *Tim.* 21b). Such competitions no doubt played an important role in the socialization of the participants, as a way of reinforcing civic bonds and instilling a sense of loyalty to the polis.

A number of leading poets, including Alcman, Anacreon, Bacchylides, Pindar, and Simonides, wrote *partheneia* (hymns for maidens) (Plu. *Mor.* 1136f). In Sparta Alcman's *partheneion* was performed by a choir of adolescent girls, possibly at a festival honoring Helen. Very likely, too, the poems that Sappho of Lesbos composed were sung by the coterie of adolescent girls in which she moved, as a kind of rite of passage prior to marriage. There is no evidence for such coteries at Athens, though girls did sing and dance at the Greater Panathenaia (Eur. *Heracl.* 777–83), and Hornblower (2004: 247–62) demonstrated that the city played a significant role in the development of archaic song culture. As an aside, it is generally assumed that choruses of unmarried girls in Greek tragedy were made up of males, just as males took all other female parts.

Choral competitions were not only memorable experiences in and of themselves but also, like so much else that was done in the name of religion, a means of reinforcing group identity. They thus contributed significantly to a child's socialization and sense of communal responsibility, not only at the civic level but also at the local and even Panhellenic level, in the case of those who were selected to perform abroad (Calame 1997). This was facilitated by the fact that choruses were organized along class, gender, and age lines. It is hardly any exaggeration therefore to state that choral song and dance were "socially integrative and fundamental to the community's well-being" (Kowalzig 2007: 5). To conclude, in that choral song and dance involved broad participation of children of all ages, they are likely to have been one of the principal mechanisms by which societal values were communally transmitted from one generation to the next.

DEATH AND BURIAL

As we have seen, children were valued for their *hagneia* or purity, a condition that was compromised by contact with the dead. It is therefore striking to note that Athenian children were not excluded from rituals performed on behalf of the dead. They participated at the *prothesis* or laying out of the body as well as at the *ekphora* or funerary cortège, as is evidenced by depictions on Attic late Geometric and black-figure vases. Indeed they are sometimes shown in close proximity to the deceased. They also participated in the family cult of the dead in periodic visits to the cemetery. Though dead children are rarely depicted in Greek art, teenage boys appear in scenes of *prothesis* on several Attic white ground *lekythoi* or oil flasks attributed to the Sabouroff Painter dated ca. 460–450. They also occasionally occur in scenes set in Hades, notably in the company of Charon, ferryman of the dead (Oakley 2003: 164–74 for references and illustrations; see also the chapter by Oakley in this volume).

Generally speaking, less care and expense were lavished on the burials of children than on those of adults, a phenomenon that is anthropologically attested for many societies, though over time the Athenians seem to have paid more attention to them (Morris

1987; Houby-Nielsen 2000: 151–66). Simple pot burials are regular from the Geometric period onward. The principal shapes are coarse-ware *pithoi*, *hydriai*, and *amphorae*, occasionally decorated but often left plain. In the classical period, though the practice of pot inhumation persisted, a pair of matching clay tubs often served as a receptacle for a dead child. Most children were inhumed. Little evidence of infant cremation has come to light, and though admittedly the practice leaves scant traces in the archaeological record the Elder Pliny's observation that "it is a universal custom not to cremate a person before the teething stage" may well pertain to Athens (*NH* 7.72).⁶ An offering sometimes placed in the graves of infants in the classical period is a small black-spouted pot that appears to have been used for feeding.

A number of Athenian *stelai* of classical date commemorate the deaths of young children and adolescents (Beaumont 2012: 92–101, 187–200). The series continued until 317 BCE when Demetrius of Phaleron introduced sumptuary legislation that brought to an end all sculpted funeral *stelai* in Athens. One especially noteworthy Athenian *stèle* depicts a naked boy aged eight to ten years attended by a dog. The epigram carved on the architrave states that the deceased, who was nicknamed Neollarion (Little Chatterbox), was snatched away by a *daimon* (Garland 2001: 84; see Oakley 2003: 179–91; also see the chapter by Oakley in this volume for general discussions of sculpted gravestones depicting children). A moving lament for a dead child is preserved in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, where Hekabe grieves for her grandson, the infant prince Astyanax, who died before knowing "youth or marriage or godlike sovereignty" and who had "scarcely been introduced to his *psyche*"—a poignant and arresting phrase (l. 1171f).⁷

Very little is known about the presumed fate in the life to come of *aoroi*, meaning "the ones who died before their time." In his account of the myth of Er, Socrates cryptically refers to "things not worthy of record" that are said about children who perish in earliest infancy (*Pl. Rep.* 10.615b–c). Plutarch ascribes to a certain Timarchus an oracular dream in which he hears "the wailing of innumerable infants" (*Mor.* 59of). It may be that *aoroi* belonged in the same general category as all those whose lives were cut short, including murder victims and suicides (Garland 2001: 77–86; on *aoroi*, see also Dasen in this volume).

CHILDREN IN ATHENIAN MYTH

Mythology overall placed little emphasis on the affective side of the parent–child relationship. A striking exception is the mother–daughter relationship involving Demeter and Kore (Persephone), which is the subject of the *Homeric Hymn to*

⁶ On burial and disposal of the corpses of children (especially infants), see also the chapters by Dasen, Liston and Rotroff, and Stevens in this volume.

⁷ Cf. Pratt in this volume on Andromache's lament for Astyanax in the *Iliad*.

Demeter, an epic poem composed in Athens probably in the archaic period. The so-called hymn also includes an account of the attempt by Demeter, disguised as a nurse, to confer immortality on Demophon, the son of Metaneira, by anointing him with ambrosia and holding him over the hearth at night. When Metaneira discovers Demeter at her task, she suspects the worst. Her reaction is evocative of the anxiety that many Greek mothers would have felt about the trustworthiness of the nurses whom they engaged—all the more so in a society that had less means than ours to expose those who were either negligent or sadistic. Like other child heroes, Demophon received heroic honors after his death, including an athletic competition (Pache 2004: 74–7). Such cults may partly have served to alleviate, and perhaps even sublimate, the psychological effects attendant upon the loss of a child. Other Athenian myths involving children include that of the hero Kekrops and his daughters Aglauros, Pandrosos, and Herse, to which reference was made earlier (Larson 1995: 39–42; Parker 2006: 433–44); and that of Erigone, the daughter of Ikarios, who hanged herself from a tree after the Athenians killed her father in the belief that the wine he had introduced them to was poison.

Children occasionally feature in myths of human sacrifice in which an animal is substituted for a human victim. The cult of Artemis in Mounychia involved the substitute sacrifice of a she-bear dressed in girl's clothing, whereas the Brauronian myth of Artemis required young girls to atone for the killing of a bear in Artemis' sanctuary by "acting the bear," as we have seen. Likewise, a deer was sacrificed in place of Iphigeneia as atonement for the killing of a deer in Artemis' sanctuary. To commemorate this event, a cult of Iphigeneia was established at Brauron, where Athenians dedicated the clothes of women who had died in childbirth (Eur.*IT* 1464–7). There is no evidence to indicate that any of these substitutions represent "revisions made at a time when Greek sentiment no longer tolerated the practice" (Hughes 1991: 84). On the contrary, the substitution may well have been original to the myth. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that this kind of myth advocated and promoted compassion toward children.

In the plays of Euripides, adolescents and young adults willingly sacrifice themselves for the greater good. The daughters of king Erechtheus sacrifice themselves to save Athens from defeat (*Erech.*); Iphigeneia consents to sacrifice herself so that the Greek army can sail to Troy (*IA*, esp. 1475–99); Makaria sacrifices herself to Persephone to placate the underworld gods and save her brothers (*Heracl.* 500–34); and Menoikeus slits his throat to fulfill a prophecy foretelling that his death would save Thebes (*Phoen.* 991–1018). In the absence of any corroborating evidence, we are hardly entitled to conclude that the voluntary sacrifice of the young was necessarily upheld as an ideal in Athenian society, though the theme may have been intended to inspire the rising generation with a sense of public duty.⁸

⁸ Hughes 1991: 189 wrote: "I do not think it will be inaccurate to say that human sacrifice flourished nowhere in ancient Greece as much as in Athens, upon the tragic stage."

CONCLUSION

Children took on a more complex set of roles in Athenian religion than their essential marginality as social actors in other spheres of public life might suggest. These roles enabled them to interact with their peer group and contributed to their sense of group identity, lending substance to the claim that “religion provided the main avenue for children into the life of the *polis*” (Golden 1990: 41). Since, moreover, piety according to Greek religious belief was directed toward one’s parents as well as to the gods, the dead, and one’s native land, we should expect that the religious practices performed by children were intended to strengthen their sense of filial duty. It is noteworthy, but unsurprising, that boys and girls rarely intersected with one another in the religious sphere, other than in informal contexts, including singing in choirs. If what we have identified as rites of passage were intended to afford protection to those passing from one stage of life to another, the benefit they provided was mainly limited to boys, though a select group of girls were also recipients.

Participation in state religion in an official capacity, on the other hand, was primarily limited to girls. The best evidence for this is the several roles that they performed—as *arrhephoroi*, *aletrides*, *kanephoroi*, *loutrides*, or *pluntrides*. Though the transience and fragility of virginity as a human condition were no doubt partly responsible for the prominent role of *parthenoi*, this may also have had something to do with the fact that two of the most prominent deities in Athens, Athena and Artemis, were themselves virgins. We cannot assume that this was universally the case throughout the Greek world therefore.⁹ In states where female deities were less to the fore, *parthenoi* may have been far less prominent. That said, only a small percentage of Athenian *parthenoi* overall were singled out for this honor. Symbolically girls represented the flower of the community, and it was for that reason no doubt that virgin sacrifice was regarded in myth as the highest form of sacrifice, particularly since their fertility was of vital importance to the state.¹⁰

Finally, whether the vulnerability and ritual purity of their children influenced the way that Greek parents related to them on an everyday basis is impossible to determine. In a world where infant mortality was perhaps as high as 25%, and where the likelihood of reaching adult years was no better than 50/50, we should not assume that religious ritual fully alleviated the anxiety and concern that inspired the Greeks to enlist the services of their gods in this vital area of human welfare, though it no doubt provided them with some comfort.

⁹ The testimonia relating to children’s participation in religion assembled in *ThesCRA* VI, pp. 17–61, pertain primarily to Athens and do not enable us to settle the matter with any confidence.

¹⁰ Aphrodite, by contrast, had little contact with *parthenoi* until the time of their marriage.

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CHAPTER 11

PLAY, PATHOS, AND PRECOCITY: THE THREE P'S OF GREEK LITERARY CHILDHOOD

LOUISE PRATT

INTRODUCTION

THE two earliest representations of children in Greek art, apart from small mourners in Geometric funerary scenes, are Astyanax being killed at the Sack of Troy and the young Achilles being handed over to the centaur Chiron to be educated (Rühfel 1984: 45–74; see also Oakley in this volume). One child murdered, another abandoned by his parents to a monster: the brute facts of Greek mythology can seem awfully harsh to children. Yet these two images beautifully represent two major threads in Greek literature's largely sympathetic presentation of children: pathos and precocity, two opposing but complementary modes of viewing essential to Greek literature's conception of the child. The one thread asks the audience to sympathize with the peculiar weakness and vulnerability of the child; the second provides an important counterweight by emphasizing the independence and extraordinary strength and resilience of certain children.

To be clear, neither the murdered Astyanax nor the centaur-reared Achilles represents typical childhood experience in ancient Greece; like much of what we see in Greek literature the events themselves are extraordinary. Literature prefers the atypical to the typical, ideals and startling deviations from them to the messy and banal reality of most people's lives, so I do not claim that we can construct a clear picture of how most children lived from looking at these literary treatments.¹ Yet, though not typical of childhood experience, the examples I will look at are paradigmatic for Greek culture's conception

¹ See Garland 1990; Golden 1990 for useful discussions of actual childhood experience in ancient Greece.

of the child: the emotions they evoke and their broad associations, the way these figures and related ones are used and reused, I claim, tell us a great deal about how the Greeks felt about and conceptualized children and childhood.

A third major thread “the playful child” combines with the pathetic and the precocious to create what I characterize as the three P’s of Greek literary childhood: play, pathos, and precocity. These three common threads are woven together in multiple ways to create a complex picture. Overall, I find Greek literature, for all its horrific tales about children, strikingly sympathetic to and indulgent of children, with a tendency to condemn adults who mistreat children and to ask the audience to identify with children and those who care for them. Moreover, the sense that childhood should be an easy time of life, in which children play and are cared for by loving adults, pervades Greek literature and serves as the implicit foil of the many exceptions it portrays. The high mortality rate for children in antiquity (see the chapter by Parkin in this volume) does not lead to an unaffectionate or distant attitude toward them in popular literature; rather, if anything, it seems to have intensified the feeling that children ought to be treasured and indulged during their brief existence. On the other hand, increasingly in the fifth century BCE, the idea that the child needs to be toughened up so that he can survive and compete against others begins to emerge as an alternative to the indulgent attitude that prevails in early hexameter.

Greek literature encompasses a large body of material, and I will therefore have to be very selective in presenting my evidence. I have tried to give greater attention to works that might be considered popular, particularly Homeric epic and Attic drama, as well as other early works, such as Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, the victory odes of Pindar, and Herodotus, that probably were known through oral performance to people beyond the reading elite and that established *topoi* that later authors respond to. I have pulled more selectively from other and later sources that seem to me less broadly representative, primarily to show continuity of theme or important deviations. Mark Golden’s chapter in this volume on Latin epic in this volume will further reveal the importance for later authors of these same images and ideas, of Asytanax and Chiron in particular.

APOLLO AND THE PLAYFUL CHILD

The etymological connection between *pais* (child) and *paizein* (play) suggests that this is a fundamental association, and Greek literature bears this out. My paradigmatic example of the playful child is the figure of the child building and destroying sandcastles, who appears in a simile in the *Iliad* compared to Apollo destroying the wall protecting the Greek forces at Troy:

And [Apollo] tore down the wall of the Achaeans
very easily (ῥεῖα μάλ’), as when a child (παῖς) piles sand by the sea-shore
when in his innocent play (νηπιέρῃσιν) he makes sand towers to amuse himself

and then, still playing (ἄθῳρων), with hands and feet ruins and wrecks them,
 So you, lord Apollo, piled in confusion much hard work
 and painful done by the Argives and drove terror among them.

(15.361–6, adapted from Lattimore translation)

This simile reflects a recurring theme in Greek literature regarding playful children: the gods resemble them, and they resemble the gods. In the simile here, the whimsicality of the action and its lack of consequence in the eyes of the actor creates the connection between Apollo's rampant violence and the childish destruction of the sandcastle. By pointing to the contrast between Apollo's ease and the toil and pain that the Achaeans have invested in the wall, the poet reminds his audience of a contrast, essential to the overall ethos of the *Iliad*, between suffering mortals (adults) and immortals (children) with their lives free of pain and effort. Playful children, like gods and unlike adult mortals, are both careless and carefree. Their actions come easily to them, with less physical and mental effort and less painful consequence, than do the actions of burdened adults. Like gods, children at play are better off than human adults, because they are happier and more at ease. They are of course also less responsible, caring, and careful, and this carelessness can lead to problems, as it does for the Achaeans in the simile here. For example, Patroclus when small (τυτθόν) kills another boy in a dice game (*Il.* 23.85–88), a mark of intemperate youth frequently implied in the word νήπιος (88); a simile comparing the Myrmidons to boys (παῖδες) stirring up a wasps' nest also confronts the possibility of harm caused by boyish playfulness (*Il.* 16.257–62). Childish play is not always innocent (cf. Golden in this volume on Amata's spinning top.)

Eros, boy god of love, inherits the role of the god as playful child, careless and carefree, with attendant notions of wanton destruction and whimsicality (cf. Cupid in Golden in this volume.). Beginning in lyric poetry of the sixth century, Eros is associated with youthful play. In brief fragments, Eros joins with the nymphs and Aphrodite in play (Anacreon *PMG* 357) and hits the poet-narrator with a "purple ball" calling him out to play with a girl (Anacreon *PMG* 358). But, like Apollo's in the simile, Eros' play has a destructive, frightening side: "The dice that Eros plays with/are raving madness and battle din" (Anacreon *PMG* 398, translation Bing and Cohen). Later poets self-consciously play the small size and youth of Eros off his power and capacity for giving pain (see, e.g., *Anacreontea* 33.10–11; Theocritus, *Idyll* 19; *Leucippe and Cleitophon* 2.1); however, the underlying assumption of such passages is that, unlike Eros, children do not normally have much power or effect.

Anacreon also reverses the analogy between god and the *paides* who are the objects of his eros; if Eros is playful, the *pais* is divine. In a well-known anecdote, when asked why he wrote hymns not for gods but for *paides*,² he is supposed to have replied, "Because these *are* our gods" (schol. Pind. *Isth.* 2.1). Presumably, the physical charms

² *Paides* is often translated "boys," and Anacreon was associated with boy-love in the later tradition. But his own poetry suggests an interest in girls as well (e.g., *PMG* 358, 373), and a passage in Plato (*Laws* 8.836a) makes clear that *paides* can refer to both male and female erotic interests.

of these *paides* are divine, but in addition the poet seems to see himself mastered by more potent youth. Where we may see the preying of these older lovers on younger people as victimization, the *erastes*-poet instead tends to present himself as the victim of an Eros-like boy or girl, who carelessly plays with the *erastes*' feelings, as a child with a toy or like a powerful and unfeeling god. It is reasonable to ask just how much fun these "Games of Eros" actually were for the young beloveds who served as the objects of the poet's admiration but whose voices are largely absent (see the speeches of Phaedrus, Agathon, and Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium* for interesting representations). But it seems possible that social constraints on the *erastes* may have given the younger beloved more control over the degree to which the relationship developed than in a more closeted, secretive culture where the problem is aggravated by shame and concealment.³

The baby Hermes in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is likewise a playful child and whimsical torturer of his older brother, and the hymn represents nicely certain additional topoi of literature associated with children. After "leaping" (θόρε, 20) from his mother's loins, the baby Hermes does not remain long in his cradle but rushes forth, displaying the characteristic impetuosity of youth. Hermes' play in the hymn more explicitly represents positive, creative aspects of childish play as well as the mischief-making of Eros and Apollo, as his first achievement, at midday on the first day of life, is the invention of a lyre from a tortoise, which is repeatedly referred to as his "toy" (ἄθρημα, 32, 40, 52). The music he is able to create on the lyre later reconciles him to his older brother, angry over Hermes' clever and inventive theft of his cattle; music making is celebrated here as the particular province of children. Laughter too falls into the province of children (Halliwell 2008: 19–25, 155–7), and Hermes both laughs (upon first finding the tortoise, line 29) and provokes laughter. Near the end of the hymn, Apollo laughs with joy (γηθήσας) at the beautiful music Hermes creates on his lyre (420–1). More surprisingly, Hermes' clever rhetorical arguments in which he defends himself as a tender-footed baby, born yesterday (273), who cares only for sleep, mother's milk, swaddling clothes about his shoulders, and warm baths (267–8), give us a brief image of the Greek view of the essentials of babyhood and earn an indulgent (ἀπαλόν) laugh from his aggrieved brother (281). A similar prevarication with a neatly evasive oath elicits a loud laugh from his father, Zeus (389). The laughter of Zeus is a rarity in early hexameter but occurs particularly in connection with his children; in the *Iliad*, Zeus laughs more than any other individual god, that is, exactly twice. Framing a scene where the younger gods, including his favorite daughters, are rather obviously misbehaving in childish ways, he laughs first (21.389–90) with joy (γηθοσύνη), once (21.508) with pleasure (ἡδύ).⁴ The tendency of Zeus to respond with indulgent laughter

³ Horn and Martens 2009: esp. 225–32; things do not necessarily improve for children under Christianity, despite changing attitudes toward pederasty. For discussion of constraints on the older lover in pederastic relationships, see Cohen 1991: 171–202 and critique of an earlier version of that argument by Golden 1990: 57–62. On pederasty see also Beaumont's chapter in this volume.

⁴ Halliwell 2008: 67–8 discussed this scene in the larger context of divine laughter in Homer.

to his children's misbehavior seems both to reflect and to model appropriate adult responses to naughty children.

But all of the examples of childish play in Greek literature do not carry the paradoxical qualities exemplified by naughty gods; childish play in the form of dancing choruses can also be a source of unmixed adult pleasure, and early hexameter poetry particularly associates children of various ages, human and divine, male and female, with music and dance. Though dancing choruses had broad cultural significance (see Calame 1991; Lonsdale 1993), the language of these passages clearly presents dance and other kinds of music as play, and this is the most characteristic activity of teenaged children, both mortal and immortal, in early hexameter poetry. So in the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*, it is characteristic of people favored by the goddess that:

... Their children (παῖδες) exult in their newly sprouted happiness
and the maidens in flower-picking choruses with joyful spirit
playing (παίζουσαι) gambol in the soft blooms of meadow. (*H.H.* 30.13–15)

The positioning of these playful children in a gentle natural scene, with maidens picking flowers, is also typical. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Apollo dances with other young gods, including Hebe, while his parents, Leto and Zeus, take pleasure in watching him playing (παίζοντα) (200–6). The beauty, grace, and joy of playful children dancing recurs again and again, clearly evoking a world of peace, of leisure and festival, characteristic of the gods, one of the consistently positive ideas associated with children that occurs repeatedly in early hexameter.

A passage from *Odyssey* 6, where Nausikaa and her age-mates go to the river to wash the laundry, offers a rare but not unparalleled example of a playful girl and one of a relatively small group of images of children working in Greek literature. Strikingly, in this case, a tedious chore quickly seems to become a game:

Now when they had come to the delightful stream of the river,
where there was always a washing place, and plenty of glorious
water that ran through to wash what was ever so dirty,
there they unyoked the mules and set them free from the wagon,
and chased them along the bank of the swirling river
to graze on the sweet river grass, while they from the wagon
lifted the wash in their hands and carried it to the black water,
and stamped on it in the basins, making a race and game of it
until they had washed and rinsed all dirt away. (*Od.* 6.85–93, Lattimore trans.)

The lovely setting and the very cooperative river contribute to a sense that doing the laundry, which must have been a real challenge in antiquity, is a pleasant and effortless task. The chasing of the mules and the competitive cleaning likewise lend an overall sense of fun to the scene, so that the maidens, though shown at work, appear to live a life of ease and pleasure. Labor is dissolved; play is paramount.

Indeed, this impression, suggested in this initial passage, becomes more explicit, when after laying out the laundry to dry the girls throw off their veils to play ball:

And among them
it was Nausikaa of the white arms who led in the dancing:
and as Artemis, who showers arrows, moves on the mountains
either along Taygetos or on high-towering
Erymanthos, delighting in boars and deer in their running,
and along with her the nymphs, daughters of Zeus of the aegis,
range in the wilds and play, and the heart of Leto is gladdened (γέγηθε)...
(*Od.* 6.100–9, Lattimore trans.)

As the playful Apollo resembles a child, the dancing Nausikaa resembles a goddess. Here again we see dance as a form of play that inspires parental delight. Something similar happens on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* in which children are shown doing small agricultural chores made light and easy, partly by the addition of music and song; like Leto, a king watches them with pleasure (γηθόσυνος) (18.555–72). Ease of movement and adult pleasure at viewing are also associated with older children (ῥιθαιοί, παρθένοι) dancing on the outside rim of the shield (18.594–605). Images of children dancing and playing define the worlds of peace and prosperity that predominate on the shield (see also *Il.* 18.490–6).

Nausikaa is, of course, on the brink of adulthood, as the themes surrounding her actions in *Odyssey* 6 suggest. Odysseus' appearance on the scene naked with only a branch covering his genitals reminds us of the threat to her childhood, but for the moment she is still in childhood and still a child at play. Greek literature tends to show more interest in boy children than in small girls, but *parthenoi*, girls on the brink of adulthood, constitute an exception, and literature shows considerable interest in girls of Nausikaa's age, often with a tender sense, as with Nausikaa here, of the fleeting nature of their childhood. Nausikaa's close relationship with her father is also characteristic of *parthenoi*, as exemplified by the relationship between Zeus and his favorite child, Athena, as well as a close relationship with his other daughter who remains a *parthenos*, Artemis.⁵

Childhoods of pleasure and ease are normative so that suffering adults in literature may contrast their own difficulties with the blissful ignorance of children. Sophocles' suffering Ajax encourages his son to enjoy his childhood in ignorance of life's miseries, feeding "on light breezes, basking / In the tenderness of your young life, giving your mother joy" (*Ajax* 558–9, Moore trans.). A character in Sophocles' *Tereus* sees a girl's life in the house of her father as the happiest of all human existences (ἡδιστον... ἀνθρώπων βίον),

⁵ Other examples include Antigone and Oedipus (*OC*), Iphigeneia and Agamemnon, and Chryseis and Chryses (*Il.* 1). Electra's preference for her father is also marked. Such examples provide strong evidence against the claim of Slater 1971 that parent–child relationships across gender were generally hostile or problematic.

“for ignorance (ἀνοία) always fosters children (παῖδας) in pleasure” (τερπνῶς; Radt 583.3–5). In a fragment by Simonides (PMG 543), Danae contrasts her own suffering with her baby son’s peaceful bliss, sleeping unknowing of their danger, as they float in a chest on the sea, put out to die by her father. Though in all three passages it is the child’s ignorance that permits their happiness rather than the playfulness of the previous passages, the contrast with suffering adulthood creates a feeling of nostalgia for childhood (cf. *Medea* 46–8). Though these representations of childhood are admittedly through the eyes of adults, they are written by people who have been children. Memories of childhood may be unreliable but provide some testimony about what it actually felt like to be a child in ancient Greece.

ASTYANAX AND THE PATHETIC CHILD

Greek literature is equally capable of using children to evoke tears as well as laughter to emphasize children’s vulnerability and weakness rather than their vigor and beauty. The *Iliad*, for all the humor it derives from depicting the gods behaving like children, shows a mature awareness of the way war can interfere with a mortal child’s careless, carefree life through the figure of Astyanax. In three separate moments in the *Iliad*, the poet derives particular pathos from the figure of Astyanax, creating a broadly representative sampling of the way war can affect children.

The first passage, at the end of *Iliad* 6 where Hector meets his wife and child on the walls of Troy, offers a portrait of a nuclear family, bound by ties of intimacy and love, in which both parents are invested in and comfortable with their baby. It provides strong evidence for certain basic assumptions about parent–child relationships that are transhistorical and for the *Iliad*’s own particular ethos in which parents are seen as ideally caring and supportive (Pratt 2007). Hector’s prayer that his son will surpass him represents a conventional view of paternal aspirations but gains considerable pathos through the audience’s knowledge that Hector’s wishes are in vain and that both father and son will die young. Similarly effective is Astyanax’s tearful reaction to Hector’s helmet, which provokes his parents’ laughter, a familiar parental reaction but here nested in a complex mixture of smiles, tears, and laughter that “transforms the significance of laughter from the merely, sentimentally natural into the richly, disquietingly symbolic” (Halliwell 2008: 54). The child’s tears and fears are ostensibly foolish, typically childish. Yet the audience’s knowledge that the cozy, loving family will soon be dissolved makes the child’s tears a moving form of insight, as like his mother he seems to see all too clearly the consequences of Hector’s bravely nodding plume.

Andromache’s lament over the dead Hector in *Iliad* 22 imagines Astyanax as a pathetic *orphanos*, a fatherless son,⁶ isolated and uncared for in the absence of his father:

⁶ On fatherless sons in general, see Huebner and Ratzan 2009; in Homer particularly see Wöhrle 2009.

You cannot help him,
 Hektor, any more, since you are dead. Nor can he help you.
 Though he escape the attack of the Achaians with all its sorrows,
 yet all his days for your sake there will be hard work for him
 and sorrows, for others will take his land away from him. The day
 of bereavement (ὀρφανικόν) leaves a child with no agemates to befriend him.
 He bows his head before every man, his cheeks are bewept, he
 goes, needy, a boy among his father's companions,
 and tugs at this man by the mantle, that man by the tunic,
 and they pity him, and one gives him a tiny drink from a goblet,
 enough to moisten his lips, not enough to moisten his palate.
 But one whose parents are living beats him out of the banquet
 hitting him with his fists and in words also abuses him
 "Get out, you! Your father is not dining among us."
 And the boy goes away in tears to his widowed mother . . .

(*Il.* 22.485–99; Lattimore trans.)

The passage simultaneously creates a bleak picture of weak social support for the fatherless child while demanding sympathy for that same child, acknowledging a split between sympathetic feelings toward fatherless children and a dearth of social institutions that support them (strikingly foreshadowing modern attitudes, I note!). But, though vivid and moving, clearly stirring up sympathy for the fatherless child, the speech is odd, as Andromache here does not seem to have grasped the full implications of Hector's death, imagining as she does an intact city and surviving social structure. Aristarchus consequently athetized this passage as describing circumstances inappropriate to Priam's son. He comments, however, that this scene is a good generic description of life for a fatherless son, and I suggest therefore that its inclusion is no accident, but that Andromache's vision dramatizes for the audience the consequences of war for many children, especially fallen Greek warriors or Trojan allies. The sorrow these children will experience when their dead father does not return is mentioned several times in the battle narrative of the poem, creating a background motif, which Andromache's effective vision animates.

Andromache's lament contrasts this bleak vision to Astyanax's life prior to Hector's death, a formerly coddled child who "sitting on his father's knees, once ate only marrow and the rich flesh of sheep" and slept in soft beds or in the arms of his nurse, "delighting in feasts" (22.500–4). Pathos is created from the stark contrast between the expected childhood of happiness, comfort, and ease, where the child is cared for tenderly, and his isolation and need at the loss of his powerful and protective father. This idealized version of the child's life is clearly one in which the parent shelters the child and even spoils him; the idea that the child of a warrior such as Hector might need to be toughened up by hardship is not raised in this tender portrait.

The final mention of Astyanax in the poem is brief in comparison with these two earlier treatments but includes the detail that clearly left a deep impression on both artists and tragedians. In her final words in the poem, her formal lament for Hector,

Andromache imagines for Astyanax two more likely ends for a child in a conquered city: enslavement alongside his widowed mother, performing unseemly deeds (ἔργα ἀεικέα) toiling for a bitter master (ἀθλεύων πρὸ ἄνακτος ἀμειλίχου) (24.733–4), a result of war that must have been common for children throughout antiquity, or death, as “one of the Achaians grabbing him by the arm will hurl him from the high wall, a mournful death, angered because Hector killed a brother perhaps or a father or even a son...” (24.734–7). Both fates are clearly presented as pitiable, as seen through the eyes of the child’s mother.

Greek tragedy sometimes also uses Iphigeneia to represent the loss of innocent youth in war. In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, Artemis, “angry at the eagles’ feast” (i.e., at the death of innocent young) demands that Agamemnon sacrifice Iphigeneia so that the commander can experience the grief he will inflict on other parents through his pursuit of the war. Aeschylus evokes the audience’s pity with such details as “her cries of father” (228), “her maidenhood” (229), “the curb on her lovely mouth” (235), “the pitiful look from her eyes” (241), and the loving way (φίλως) she has sung a paean of good fortune for her beloved (φίλου) father in the past (245–7). Euripides’ *Iphigeneia at Aulis* provides one gut-wrenching moment after another, as the maiden, first joyful in her ignorance, greets her anguished father with love (*IA* 640–78), later piteously appeals to his paternal feelings for his firstborn favorite (*IA* 1220–32, 1238–42) and invokes the perceptive heart of her watching baby brother (*IA* 1241–6), and finally bravely determines on self-sacrifice in Greece’s interest, becoming nobler than any adult in the play (*IA* 1375–end).

The sacrifice of Iphigeneia is, of course, just one of many stories of parents accidentally or deliberately destroying their own children in Greek tragedy and in Greek literature more generally, and this has sometimes been used to argue that the Greeks were particularly hostile toward their children (Slater 1971; deMause 1974). Much likelier, however, is that these many stories of parents destroying children represent Greek culture’s particular fears or anxieties (Pache 2004; see also Garland 1990: 148–9); in a culture where it was a challenge to raise your child to adulthood, what could be worse than destroying him or her? Again and again, the tragedians evoke pity for the children,⁷ for their family and caregivers, and even often for the murderers themselves, who may be mad like Heracles or delusional like Autonoe in Euripides’ *Bacchae*. The figure of Niobe, who indirectly destroys her own children through her prideful boasting, and the nightingale (later Procne), who murders her son “when the madness was on her,” are consistently presented as figures of particular sorrow, mourning eternally for the children they have themselves destroyed (e.g., *Il.* 24.602–17; *Od.* 19.518–23; Aesch. *Suppl.* 60–7,

⁷ The children of Medea and Heracles, as well as other babies and children who experience early death in Greek myth, are also immortalized in Greek hero cult, where they are celebrated for their beauty and mourned; they must receive compensation for their early deaths in the form of funeral games, for example at Isthmia or Nemea, or in other kinds of ritual (Pache 2004). They thus suggest that even in a culture where infant and child mortality is common, early death is not simply accepted but requires myth and ritual to be tolerable.

Ag. 1142–8; Soph. *Ant.* 823–33; Eur. *Suppl.* 79–82). The murder of children in tragedy is typically surrounded by many conventional statements by the chorus and other characters about the love of parents for children, which the tragedians use to intensify the emotional impact of the murder (e.g., Eur. *HF* 633–6), and in almost every case, including Medea, the murderous parent expresses anguished love for the child he or she kills; it is precisely the conflict between the familiar parental emotions and the dark actions that feeds the pathos. Therefore, if these murders do also in some way represent dark recesses of the Greek psyche, we need to acknowledge that identical recesses are evident in the media frenzy surrounding contemporary mothers who kill—we are repelled, horrified, and perhaps titillated in the same way as the Greek tragic audience. The fascination exerted by mothers who kill is rooted in assumptions about the normal maternal role as fundamentally defensive, an assumption Euripides' choruses and characters show that he was well aware of (see, e.g., *IA* 1255–6; *Phoinissae* 355–6).

There are also poignant moments generated by the loss of parents in tragedy, where loss is seen through the eyes of the child, though this is far less common, possibly because such losses are expected or, more practically, because adults play most roles in tragedy. Alcestis' son has several pathetic speeches as his mother is dying, including such lines as "Hear me, mother, listen to me, oh please, listen, it is I, mother, I your little one lean and kiss your lips and cry out to you" and "Father, I am too small to be left alone by the mother I loved so much" (see, e.g., *Alcestis* 393–404, 406–15). Alcestis' reflection on what her daughter will lose at her death also shows special sympathy for the girl child's lot at the loss of her mother (*Alcestis* 302–19).

In addition, an elegiac mood may be generated by the passing of the *parthenos* from child to adult. This is hinted at in the Nausikaa passage discussed previously but is manifest in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter's* treatment of the rape of Persephone. The beginning of the hymn showing Persephone with other girls picking flowers and then enticed by a special flower, which is described as a toy (ἄθλημα), makes clear that her rape by Hades represents a move from childhood to adulthood as well as from life to death. The motif of flower picking frequently foreshadows death in stories of child heroes for boys as well as girls (Pache 2004: 99), the picked flower an appropriate symbol for a sudden loss of the freshness and vigor of youthful life. Men are allowed in Greek thinking to be children longer and to pass more gradually out of childhood into adulthood, but the loss of childhood is "a violent rupture" for girls (Garland 1990:170–4).

These passages, most of which are drawn from epic and tragedy, have a significantly different tone from the passages describing the playful child yet support a similar underlying ideology: children are vulnerable and need the love and support of their parents; absent that, their lives are pitiable, tragic when those who should love and protect them instead destroy them, and usually terrible for the destroyer as well. Adult pursuit of war is particularly hazardous to the young, but marital infidelity or terrible impiety can also be dangerous (unsurprisingly!). Childhood should be easy and pretty, marked by toys, flowers, and a close connection to the natural world; its loss is a source of sorrow.

ACHILLES AND THE PRECOCIOUS CHILD

The story that the young Achilles was separated from his parents and turned over to the centaur Chiron, who brought him up in a cave in the wilds of Mt. Pelion, though far from a tale of ordinary Greek childhood, is similarly paradigmatic, representing a particularly common theme in Greek literature's depiction of children: the wondrous precocity of a child god or hero. Unlike my other two paradigms, this story is not found in the *Iliad* and is even contradicted by it, as the *Iliad* presents Achilles growing up in Peleus' house, tended by a surrogate human father Phoenix, accompanied by Patroclus (23.84–8), and hearing his mother "boasting" in the halls of his father "often" (1.396). Phoenix's fond recollection (9.485–95) portrays Achilles as an ordinary fussy baby, not a precocious hero. Chiron is mentioned briefly (4.219, 11.831, 16.143–4), but not as a foster parent. Accounts of Odysseus' childhood are similar in presenting vignettes that are within the realm of normal human experience (*Od.* 24.337–42, 21.15–35, 19.399–466). The precocious child becomes ubiquitous in Greek literature only in the fifth century BCE, perhaps under the influence of the Cyrus story, though there are earlier prototypes associated with baby gods rather than with human children. But vase painting suggests the story of Chiron rearing Achilles was known as early as 650 BCE and became quite popular (Rühfel 1984, 61; see also Oakley in this volume); though not Homeric, the story had cultural resonance from an early period.

Pindar gives us the earliest surviving literary version of the Achilles–Chiron story in *Nemean* 3 (ca. 475 BCE). His version brings out clearly the precocious child motif so beloved by Greek literature: "Blond [Achilles], while still a child at play about Philyra's house, performed deeds of might (παῖς ἔὼν ἄθυρε μεγάλα ἔργα): often brandishing his iron javelin, swift as the wind, he battled savage lions to their deaths and slew boars, dragging their bodies, trembling in the last gasp, to Chiron the centaur; this from the time he was six and ever after. Artemis was amazed and bold Athena marveled to see him killing stags without the help of hounds or traps: he ran them down on foot" (Pindar *Nemean* 3.43–52, Nisetich trans.). Here Pindar combines the motif of the playful child with that of the precocious child: deeds of might and speed that would be impossible even for an ordinary adult are forms of play for the six-year-old hero. Even Artemis and Athena are impressed.

Four major overlapping motifs recur in association with precocious children that are prominent in the Achilles–Chiron story: the separation of the child from parents at a young age (Shapiro's absent father syndrome; Shapiro 2003: 89–95); the rearing of the child in the natural world rather than amid the comforts of civilization, for example, in Chiron's cave, a detail repeatedly mentioned by Pindar (see also Rühfel 1984: 65–9 on the representation of nature in vase paintings on this theme); the performance of extraordinary deeds typically beyond the capacity even of adults; and the child's interaction with wild animals or other creatures that would normally frighten a child, often including a beast who turns out to be friendly. Pindar's version contains a friendly monster as well as the wild animals that Achilles subdues, but the wild

animal can also nurture the child as in Pindar's story of the pair of gray-eyed serpents that nourish the abandoned baby Iamos on bees' "harmless venom" (ἀμέμφει ἰώ, an oxymoron that reminds us of the potential harm of bee stings) (*O.* 6.45–7).⁸ Each of these subthemes is a deliberate inversion of cultural assumptions about what children need (loving parents, protection from the elements and other dangers) and are (relatively weak, vulnerable).

Early prototypes of the precocious child story are tales of the gods: Hephaestus, hurled from Olympos by his mother, ashamed at his "shrivelled feet," then taken up and raised by Thetis and Eurynome for nine years surrounded by the swirling currents of Ocean with its "foaming, roaring rush that never died" (*Il.* 18.394–405, *H.Ap.* 316–20);⁹ Zeus, turned over to Gaia to rear in a remote cave in Crete to protect him from his destructive father (*Theogony* 479–84); and Dionysus, who first is hidden from the hostile Hera in a cave in Nysa, is nursed by wood nymphs (*H.H.* 26), and later leaps into the sea to escape the threats of Lycurgus and is taken up by Thetis (*Il.* 6.132–37). Though these early examples are less obviously about precocity,¹⁰ the gods' survival in the face of these childhood dangers suggests the special power of these babies, who lack the most frequently mentioned source of support for mortal children, attentive parents. That nature, as represented by nymphs of forest and sea and by Gaia herself, nurtures rather than destroys the otherwise unprotected babies suggests the close connection to the natural world characteristic of children in these tales: what would kill other children—exposure in the woods or immersion in the sea—preserves them.¹¹

The idea of a peculiar strength demonstrated by separation from parents and rearing in the natural world far from home also underlies Pindar's conception of Achilles' rearing by Chiron. Heroes, like the athletes Pindar celebrates in his *Odes*, achieve most when they come out from the protective wing of their parents and escape the softening effects of the civilized world and parental care. Such young men emerge with a stronger and better "natural" virtue superior to the virtue of carefully tended and protected youths who may become corrupted by the comforts of civilization. Because parents are perceived to protect their children, literature frequently separates exceptional children from parents

⁸ That snakes can also be seen as threatening to children is evident in the story of the infant Heracles and of the baby Opheltes killed by snakes. See Pache 2004: 95–134 for this story. For the motif, more generally, see Huys 1995: 270–98.

⁹ Hephaestus' hurling by his father Zeus described at *Il.* 1.590–95 fits the pattern less neatly, and Halliwell's 2008: 60 suggestion that this story is a spontaneous invention by Hephaestus may be right.

¹⁰ In the *Iliad* 6 passage, Dionysus does perhaps show one sign of his special divine capacities by leaping, despite his apparent infancy, into the surf, but the emphasis on his childlike fear in the passage is not typical of later pictures of precocious divine or heroic infants who are shown to be superior to normal children, less prone to fear and tears, and more capable of protecting themselves.

¹¹ The nymphs' role as destroyers is recorded on the gravestones of young children (Garland 1990: 112). Aphrodite turns Aeneas in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* over to the nymphs to rear out of her shame at being impregnated by a mortal, the earliest surviving literary work to apply this motif to a mortal. There is ambiguity in the nymphs' role here and elsewhere: are they *kourotrophoi*, or is this a way of describing exposure among the trees—to which the hymn clearly equates the nymphs (*H.Aphr.* 264–8)?

to emphasize their achievements under more challenging conditions. Separation from home to promote maturity, as in the story of Telemachus in the *Odyssey*, is a less extreme version of the same phenomenon.

Pindar particularly likes to use Chiron as an educator for young heroes in these contexts, his hybrid character perhaps reflecting the hybrid nature of the child itself, a mixture of the human and the animal, of natural instinct with human form. Pindar also associates Chiron with Jason (*N.* 3.54, *P.* 4.115), with Asclepius (*N.* 3.54, *P.* 3.5–7), and even with a precocious girl child, Kyrana (= Cyrene), who “cared nothing for pacing back and forth at her loom or for dining at home with her friends, — instead, fighting with bronze javelins and sword, she slew beasts of prey” (*P.* 9.18–22, Nisetich trans.). When Apollo witnesses this unusual *parthenos* wrestling “alone and weaponless with a mighty lion” (*P.* 9.26–8), he calls on Chiron to “leave your sacred cavern to marvel at a woman’s power, marvel at her courage, how she struggles with head undaunted, a girl keeping her heart above the battle” (*P.* 9.30–2). Apollo marvels too at her living in the “hollows of the shadowy mountains” (*P.* 9.34), another characteristic mark of her exceptionality. Though Kyrana is not evidently Chiron’s ward like the boys, Apollo’s address to Chiron, which goes on to ask for permission to “pluck the honeyed fruit of love,” may suggest that she is under his protection. In any case, Chiron’s invoking in connection with Kyrana reflects her hybrid nature, still an untamed creature of the wilds, undomesticated, though human.

Another example that clearly emphasizes childish precocity is the story of the baby Heracles strangling the twin snakes sent against him by Hera, which is also told by Pindar (*N.* 1.33–72) and again later by Theocritus (*Idyll* 24). Like the Chiron–Achilles story, it becomes a popular subject in Greek art; *Nemean* 1 is the earliest extant literary version, approximately contemporary with the earliest extant image (ca. 480 BCE) (Woodford 1983; see also Oakley in this volume). Both Pindar and Theocritus emphasize the baby-like qualities of Heracles, Pindar mentioning his recent birth, his saffron swaddling bands (“the equivalent of royal purple diapers” as Rosenmeyer 1969: 242 comments), and his cradle, while Theocritus puts him at ten months and describes Alcmena’s tender care, including bath, nursing, and lullaby.¹² But despite these details suggesting how Heracles is similar to other infants, the overall point of the story is clearly to show the extraordinary nature of the baby hero. Theocritus explicitly contrasts Heracles’ response to the snakes to that of his mortal half-brother Iphicles, who cries and kicks off his blankets and becomes “rigid with terror” (Gow trans.), as his powerful “twin” leaps for joy and laughs, crushing the snakes in his paradoxically tender hands. Despite the threat to the child, these examples seem to revel in playfully mixing childish qualities with the heroic, delighting in the cute effects achieved by visualizing the small child or hero acting in a superhuman way.

¹² See Pache 2004: 107–11 on the way the mother’s lullaby often carries themes of menace and foreshadows danger to the child.

The Heracles story is a variant of a story that becomes increasingly common in literature beginning in the fifth century, the story of “the boy who lived,” the child exposed (typically) or otherwise assaulted, who manages to survive into adulthood to become something extraordinary, often with significant dramatic irony (such as he lives to destroy his would-be destroyer, as in the Perseus tale and in the contemporary version, the Harry Potter series). Particularly famous examples include the story of Cyrus as told in Herodotus and Sophocles’ Oedipus, but these stories are absolutely ubiquitous in drama, staples of tragedy, satyr play, and new comedy and are found elsewhere as well, including in Longus’ novel *Daphnis and Chloe*.¹³ I group these stories under the precocious child heading, because they are defined by the absence of the most normative feature of child life, the child’s dependence on parental care. The natural world, which is typically intended to destroy the untended child, instead nurtures him, as in the early stories about gods, and the child faces wild animals and beasts showing his resilience (Huys 1995: 270–98) and often performing other marvelous feats that reveal his natural superiority in difficult circumstances (Huys 1995: 335–63). As the story pattern of the “boy who lived” gets transferred from heroes and gods to ordinary children including girls in New Comedy, there is less emphasis on the exceptional qualities of the child. However, even in *Daphnis and Chloe*, where the children’s parents are ordinary citizens, Longus emphasizes the extraordinary nature of the two’s good fortune and suggests that they are particularly favored by the gods in their beauty and innocence, both becoming “more beautiful than country children usually are.” Like Harry Potter, these children are simultaneously just like normal kids and extraordinary, making them perfect vehicles for fantasizing.

These stories celebrate the potential, resilience, and strength of the child. Though they have been used as evidence of adult hostility toward children in Greek antiquity and are sometimes still cited as evidence for the social practice of exposure despite scholarly skepticism about their verisimilitude (see Evans Grubbs in this volume), these stories are largely about the child, celebrating his survival against the hostility of more powerful adversaries under dangerous conditions without the support of parents. While in real-life cases of exposure death may not always be the intention (see Evans Grubbs in this volume), literature tends to focus on stories where adults set out to destroy the child to emphasize further the extraordinary nature of the child. The popularity of the Harry Potter series, which clearly adapts these motifs, shows the contemporary appeal of stories in which parentless children overcome more powerful adversaries who have tried to destroy them. These stories are, at a very basic level, about growing up and reaching one’s potential, so that although they often feature “special” children, gods, or heroes (or wizards!) they promote identification with the child hero.

¹³ Huys 1995 examines the use of this story pattern in Euripidean tragedy and offers a compelling survey of the many stories associated with exposure across various cultures, updating important earlier analyses by Binder 1964, who uses the Cyrus tale as paradigmatic, and Delcourt 1944, who starts with the Oedipus tale. See also Ogden 1997.

In contrast, the adults responsible for the exposure, sometimes of negligible importance, may be criticized for their cruelty or poor judgment and may be brutally punished (e.g., Hdt. *Hist.* 1.119–20). There is frequently comment on the callousness of or the terrible suffering of the parent who exposes the child (see esp. *Ion* 340–68, 503–8, 954–64, 1369–79, 1489–1500; *OT* 1175; cf. Hdt. 1.109) and on the superior humanity of the rustics who pick them up (Hdt. 1.111–2; *OT* 1178). In *Daphnis and Chloe*, the rustic picks up the child because he does not want to be outdone in humanity (φιλανθρωπία) by the goat that nurses it (1.3). Longus comments too on parental shortsightedness when Daphnis' father explains that he was forced to expose Daphnis because he could not support his growing family but then was bereft when his other children died of disease (4.24), and Chloe's father acknowledges his error in exposing her due to poverty and then being incapable of having further children when he became wealthy (4.35). Though here and in New Comedy the parents are rewarded rather than punished, by the survival of their children and their happy reunion in apparent wish fulfillment, the exposure and separation are presented as serious errors from which the parents would suffer if not for the improbably satisfying outcome. Thus, the prevalent use of exposure as a plot device in literature should not be taken as casual endorsement of the social practice.

The precocity theme also becomes increasingly common in the Hymnic tradition beginning in the fifth century and is prominent in surviving fragments of and testimonia about satyr plays. In both contexts, it is unsurprisingly humorous rather than tragic and frequently combined with the motif of play. Though the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* already discussed provides a beautiful early example of the weaving together of these themes, Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* gives an amusing later example, showing continuity but also applying these themes to a female child. The three-year-old Artemis bravely faces the monstrous Cyclopes, sources of terror for the nine-year-old Okeanides, whose mothers deliberately make Hermes impersonate the powerful creatures to scare the girls into good behavior. When Brontes takes the little Artemis on his lap, she tears out his chest hair, permanently depilating him, a detail reflecting a babyish propensity to pull hair but with divine strength (73–80). She goes on to wheedle a bow, quiver, and arrows from the Cyclopes, noting that she is Leto's child as much as Apollo, a nod to sibling rivalry, and promising them meat in return, mirroring Achilles' bringing of animals to Chiron. Equipped with gear, the self-possessed three-year-old races off to Pan in Arcadia to collect dogs for hunting; like the boy-child Hermes and the swift-footed Achilles, she displays the impetuosity of youth.

Aeschylus' satyr play *Dictyoulkoi* uses the familiar theme of the "boy who lived," but the baby Perseus, who has come ashore with his mother, Danae, in the chest in which they were exposed, is taken up not by Chiron but by another hybrid monster, the crude and unsentimental father of the satyrs, Silenus. In a surviving fragment, Silenus offers a parodic glimpse of Achilles' rustic life with Chiron:

Silenus [To baby Perseus]: Come he[re], diddums!
 (He makes clucking noises.)
 Don't be frightened! Why are you whimpering?

Let us go over here to my sons,
 so that you can come to my kind,
 protecting (παιδοτρόφους) arms, dearie,
 and find pleasure in the martens and fawns
 and baby porcupines,
 and you can make a third in bed
 with your mother and your father here.
 And daddy shall give his little one some laughs (γελοῖα)
 and a healthy upbringing, so that one day,
 when you've grown strong, you yourself—
 for your father's losing his grip on his fawn-killing footwork(?)—
 shall chase down beasts without a spear,
 and shall give them to your mother for dinner,
 in the same way as do your stepbrothers,
 among whom you'll be earning your keep.
 (*Dictyoulkoi* fr. 47a, 802–20, trans. adapted from the Loeb and Henderson)

Unlike the apparently dignified and noble Chiron of Pindar's *Odes*, the satyr's attentions are clearly self-interested, allowing him access to the bed of the beautiful Danae and providing him with a convenient source of meat in the future. But the familiar elements of the natural existence of the heroic life are identifiable, including the spearless hunting, the outrunning of the prey, and the connection to animals, though here of a more humble variety. In this passage the baby Perseus appears to be whimpering (804)—either the satyr is scarier than Chiron or Perseus more cowardly than Achilles. However, the passage immediately preceding shows the baby laughing (786) and reaching for Silenos' phallus (or bald head?), and earlier in the play he speaks "with tender sounds" to Silenus "as though his honored nurse" (47). Indeed, even more than the centaur, the playful, uncivilized satyrs, with their close connection to the natural world, their irresponsibility, naïvete, and carelessness, their perpetual motion, their unceasing pursuit of pleasure, as sources of laughter, reflect the child's own nature; the satyrs are in fact themselves in many ways childlike, as their father comments and his paternal presence consistently demonstrates (Griffith 2002: 220–7). Satyr play thus seems fond of combining two favorite themes: the playful child (represented by the satyrs); and the precocious child. Alcibiades' extended comparison of Socrates to a satyr in the *Symposium* plays off this tradition of satyrs as educators of precocious young heroes. Notorious for his playing (παίζων), Socrates makes a suitable heir to the satyrs. Alcibiades suggests another connection in his conflation of two adages "wine and children are truthful," suggesting that both, perhaps like Socrates, reveal truths that sober adults might be incapable of attaining with their civilized tact and conventional morality.

The precocious child stories depart self-consciously from cultural norms whereby parents protect and care for children amid the comforts of civilization, while children are weak and incapable, fearful, and ignorant. In so doing, the stories affirm the norm but also question it by hinting at a stronger natural potential in children to excel without

parental interference. These stories exhibit a certain nostalgia for the child left behind, a desire to retain the child's nature, not to destroy it with culture, to preserve the natural and the monstrous, the childish and the playful, not to overcivilize with a false veneer but to allow the unvarnished truth to emerge, to appreciate the wisdom represented by nature and wine and play. Though adults frequently, and even parents occasionally, figure in some versions of these stories as hostile adversaries, ultimately these stories do not reflect a cultural hostility toward children. Rather, they are celebrations of childhood triumph over adversity, about attaining independence from parents and other adults.

CONCLUSION

When reading Greek literature about children, I cannot help but be reminded of the anecdote about Solon and the Egyptian reported in Plato's *Timaeus* (20d–27a), in which Solon tells the Egyptian priests at their request the most ancient Greek things, stories about the first man, the flood, and the like, only to be rebuked by a very aged priest, “You Greeks are always children, and there is not an old man among you” (22b5). Though the Egyptian priest is referring to the greater antiquity of Egyptian traditions and condemning Greek tradition as less well-established, later authors detach the adage Ἕλληνες ἀεὶ παῖδες (You Greeks are always children) from context and reapply it with broader significance,¹⁴ suggesting perhaps a certain childishness fundamental to Greek identity. The childish propensity toward play, laughter, and invention, toward misbehavior that overcomes stuffy authority so characteristic of children in Greek literature, seems also fundamental to Greek literature's own self-awareness. The eternally playful (παίζων) Socrates (Plato *Symp.* 216; cf., e.g., *Rep.* 7, 536c) is philosophy's child, the impetuous, ever youthful Achilles epic's. Plato's story in the *Timaeus* of Solon and the Egyptian is complexly nested in a characteristically Platonic way that I cannot adequately address here. Notably, however, it is told by Critias, who first heard it at the *Apatouria*, a boys' festival (see Garland in this volume), when he was about ten. Critias concludes his reflection by saying that he would be surprised if he forgot any details of the story for “the lessons of our childhood make a wonderful impression on our memories” due to “childish delight in listening;” he contrasts this with his tendency in old age to forget what he learned only yesterday (cf. *Rep.* 7, 536d–e). Thus, though in the Egyptian's mouth the maxim “the Greeks are always children” is ostensibly a critique that demeans both Greeks and children, Plato seems to assert through context a contrary view of children (and thereby of the Greeks) that is more positive: they delight in stories, have impressionable memories,

¹⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ars rhetorica* 11.4.7; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 10.4.19; John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios (homiliae 1–24)*, 62.92.19; *De Babyla contra Julianum et gentiles*, sect. 108, line 11.

and perhaps also exhibit an essential playfulness and inventiveness that may help to mitigate the often dire circumstances of real-life conditions for children (and others) in ancient Greece.

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PART III

CHILDREN AND
CHILDHOOD IN
ANCIENT ROME

CHAPTER 12

CHILDREN IN LATIN EPIC

MARK GOLDEN

INTRODUCTION

In his prologue to the *Aetia*, Callimachus complains that the Telchines—dwarves who stand in for jealous contemporaries—grumble because he wrote short poems like a child instead of an epic.¹ As it happens, we have an example of a short poem by a Roman child. This, the work of Q. Sulpicius Maximus, earned an honorable mention at the Capitoline Games of 94 CE in the competition in verse improvisation.² Maximus died soon after, not yet twelve years old.

The poem represents the words of Zeus to Helios, rebuking the sun god for allowing his young son Phaëthon to drive his chariot, an indulgence that led to climate change on a scale not even a modern government could ignore and to Phaëthon's death. We know it from an impressive and costly monument set up by Maximus' parents, an index both of their grief and pride in their son's achievements and of their own social success. The monument too has risen in the world, placed as it is high up in the Aurelian Wall so that passers-by must look up to see it, as if to follow Phaëthon's fatal course.³ It depicts Maximus, imagined as older than his years according to the common motif of the *puer senex*, and tells us that he died from too much hard work.

¹ Callim. *Aetia* prologue 1.1–7. Cf. this comment in a modern Canadian novel: “There are no long romantic epics about the lives of six-year-olds. This is only because there are no six-year-old epic poets . . .”; Hood 1975: 34.

² Döpp 1996; Bernsdorff 1997. I learned a lot from K. M. Coleman, “Laid Out for Posterity: A Roman Tombstone with a Child's Portrait and His Poem,” the twenty-third Edmund G. Berry Lecture, delivered at the University of Manitoba on March 13, 2011, and from subsequent correspondence with Professor Coleman. For the altar to Q. Sulpicius Maximus, see further the chapter by Larsson Lovén in this volume and her figure 6.

³ What is seen today in the Aurelian Wall is a reproduction; the original is in the Musei Capitolini—Centrale (inv. III.75).

There are obvious parallels between the child poet and his poem. Both Maximus and Phaëthon die young and earn fame nonetheless. In each case, there is room for parental blame and guilt: Helios was irresponsible in lending the chariot of the sun, Maximus' parents in letting him work so hard. In each case too the son proves to be his parents' true child, Phaëthon by mimicking his father's fecklessness, Maximus by enjoying a competitive success that mirrors the social ascent of his freedperson parents. But I will stop here, before this starts to sound like a historian's parody of literary criticism. This was, after all, a real-life tragedy, the premature death of a boy of promise; the monument itself, with Maximus' epitaph and poem, was not originally intended for the Aurelian Wall but incorporated into it only later. In any case, though Maximus' poem is evidence of the importance of improvisation in Roman education and of a Roman boy's knowledge of Greek and Latin literature (of Apollonius of Rhodes as well as, more predictably, of Homer and Ovid), it was composed in Greek and so not directly relevant to a chapter on Latin literature. We must content ourselves, as usual, with adult representations of children and childhood.

Fortunately, there are plenty of these, even in authors and works where they are unexpected or unnoticed. Take Lucretius. Remarking on the use of children as symbols in her magisterial account of children and childhood in Roman Italy, Beryl Rawson (2003: 82) noted, "Lucretius and Catullus are the two Republican poets who have the most eloquent images of children of this kind." But this is to claim very little: how many Republican poems survive? Moreover, Rawson cites only three passages in the *De rerum natura*, and there are just two references to Lucretius noted in her index.⁴ Yet a rereading of Lucretius' great poem reveals a surprising amount of material, not merely the first use of the plural *infantes* as a noun (1.186), "thus recognizing a particular age group with particular characteristics" (p. 140, n. 15), but also a wide range of qualities and attributes. Many of these are negative. So newborns, unlike beasts of every other kind, are mute and helpless, requiring rattles and nurses to lull them with inarticulate babble (5.222–34; Rochette 1992). Even when older they are still weak and delicate (3.447–54), fearful of the dark and the terrors they imagine it conceals (3.87–90 = 6.35–8), and easily fooled (Lucretius borrows the traditional example of physicians tricking children into taking wormwood medicine by smearing honey on the rim of the cup: 1.936–42 = 4.11–7; cf. Pl. *Laws* 2.659e). However, Lucretius' children are characterized positively too. After all, the physicians' ruse is meant to benefit the children they dupe, a sign of the care and concern that are evident elsewhere. The fear of death is one of Lucretius' main themes; it is explained by the pain of losing "the winsome children who rush to snatch the first kiss at greeting and tear the heart with speechless joy" (3.894–8, cf. 4.1233–56). The evils of superstition are another, exemplified by Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter though she was the first to give the name of father to the king (1.80–101). Civilization itself is said to have arisen when men and

⁴ Similarly, there is but one entry under "Lucretius" in Wiedemann's 1989 book on adults and children in the Roman Empire, while Cicero merits sixteen.

women learned to live together and to care for their children, and these children in their turn contributed more directly by easily overcoming their parents' stubborn temper (5.1011–23).

It is still more striking that Lucretius' poem includes instances of close observation of children, gesturing to express their will before they can speak (5.1028–32—a passage later parodied by Ovid [*Met.* 6.349–59; cf. *Fasti* 3.221–2]), spinning around in play (4.400–3). Nor is he unaware of stages of childhood, such as the shedding of baby teeth and the growth of hair at puberty (5.672–4). One of his arguments against the existence of centaurs in fact depends on horses' and humans' different rates of development; a horse reaches its prime at age three, when a boy may still fumble in his sleep for his mother's breast.⁵ This sensitivity to childhood's stages likely explains a difficult passage in Book 4, where sleepers dream that they are relieving themselves at a lavatory or chamber pot and so wet the bed (4.1026–9). *Puri*, the manuscript reading at 1026, cannot stand as a contraction for *pueri* or be translated as “the fastidious” (though this is a common solution). The most recent discussion opts for *multi*, *pusi*, or *poti*, justifying the last two by invoking comic ridicule of drunkards (Brown 1994). But the passage moves on to wet dreams, a topic introduced by *tum* (“then”; 4.1029–36), and Lucretius' interest in child development suggests that the bed-wetters and seed-spillers represent two successive groups of children; we should likely read *parvi*, “little ones” (Clarke 1984).

Lucretius, then, ranks with Hume—and not Kant—as a child-friendly philosopher according to the distinction drawn by Isabel Dalhousie in *The Careful Use of Compliments* (McCall Smith 2007: 9–10). But if even such an unlikely source proves to be so rich in references to children, it is impractical to try to cover all that Latin literature as a whole has to say on the subject in a short chapter—all the more since Lucretius' characterizations, both pejorative and in praise, will recur regularly. I have therefore chosen to focus on one genre only: heroic epic. What follows is based on the remains of Ennius, *Annals* (where we find a description of Romulus and Remus as boys, jostling and throwing stones as they play with shepherds; fr. 69–70 Skutsch); Vergil, *Aeneid*; Lucan, *Civil War*; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*; Statius, *Thebaid* and the fragmentary *Achilleid*; and, last but not longest, Silius Italicus, *Punica*. Extending as they do from 169 BCE to around 100 CE, these epic poems provide a rare opportunity to study the treatment of children and childhood in one genre over a considerable period. Both continuity and change ought to be clearer as a consequence. I will organize my discussion under four headings: genre, sex and death, political overtones, and social change. All are applicable to Latin literature in general. One theme will predominate: the range and variety of ways children are shown, even within this one genre, and the importance of context, literary no less than social, cultural and historical.

⁵ 5.878–89. This too is parodied by Ovid, *Met.* 12.393–428; DeBrohun 2004.

GENRE

Many motifs of Roman heroic epic are of course found in other literary genres and artistic media. So when Vergil's Numanus Remulus boasts of the hardiness of his Italian folk—"we take our babies down to the river at birth and harden them in icy water" (*Aen.* 9.603–4)—his words find echoes not only in Valerius Flaccus' Gesander (6.335–8) but also in ethnological accounts in other genres, both ancient and modern.⁶ Lucan notes that the Psylli of North Africa test their babies' legitimacy by exposing them to venomous snakes, and Silius Italicus has a Carthaginian make a like claim for his own neighboring people (*Lucan* 8.898–908; *Sil. Pun.* 1.411–3); an epic borrowing it may be, but Pliny too knows of the Psyllian custom (*NH* 7.2.14).

Vergil's use of children to construct narratives of lost innocence and cultural decline owes much to the lyric poetry of Catullus (Petrini 1997). And Statius' interest in the childhood of Achilles is paralleled in many other products of the imperial period, from Philostratus' *Imagines* to the silver treasure from Kaiseraugst (Cameron 2009). Other motifs are taken over more or less unchanged from the model for all heroic epic, Homer's *Iliad*. Homer often refers to animal parents, especially in similes, to portray the natural roles that are meant to represent the norm: nurturing, protecting, mourning when these measures fail (Pratt 2007: 31–4). In Roman heroic epic, parents likewise feed, defend, and lose children of many different species: birds (eagles, swallows, kingfishers); cattle; tigers; lions; wolves.⁷ Some tropes occur in a number of Roman epics but are modified to suit the circumstances. When Dido's lover Aeneas abandons her, she addresses him in his absence: "if only I had at least a little Aeneas playing in my home to bring you back by his looks" (*Verg. Aen.* 4.327–30). The lament is especially moving because of its use of *parvulus*, the only true diminutive in the poem, and is memorable enough to be reflected by wives mourning their dead husbands and by a mother, Thetis, as she imagines holding another Achilles, her grandson, in her arms.⁸ Others undergo more extensive transformations. There are many sad deaths of children in the *Iliad*, including some witnessed by parents, but it is Vergil who brings out the youth of Laocoön's children (*Aen.* 2.213–5); replaces Panthus' son, a warrior slain by Achilles in the *Iliad*, by a young grandson (*Aen.* 2.320–1); and invents a verbal formula to express the theme.⁹

⁶ For example, Arist. *Pol.* 7.1336a15; Horsfall 1971: 1110 n.2, Dickie 1985: 178. In Miriam Toews' *Irma Voth* (Toews 2011: 147) one Mexican Mennonite sister tells another that hippies throw their children into the ocean to teach them how to swim.

⁷ Birds: Val. F. 7.375–9, Stat. *Theb.* 5.599–604, 10.449–62, 12.15–21, *Ach.* 1.212–6; eagles: *Sil. Pun.* 12.55–9; swallows: *Verg. Aen.* 12.473–7; kingfishers: Val. F. 4.44–9; cattle: Stat. *Theb.* 6.186–92, 9.115–9; tigers: Val. F. 1.489–93, Stat. *Theb.* 2.120–33, 4.315–6, 10.820–6, *Sil. Pun.* 12.458–62; lions: Val. F. 6.346–9, Stat. *Theb.* 9.739–43, 10.414–9, cf. *Ach.* 1.168–70, *Sil. Pun.* 10.124–7; wolves: Stat. *Ach.* 1.704–8. Only Orpheus's lyre could cause birds to abandon the nestlings they love: *Sil. Pun.* 11.406–8.

⁸ Wives: Val. F. 3.316–9; Stat. *Theb.* 12.345–8, where Argia says a little Polynices will warm her bed after her husband's death, though the boy is in fact named Thesander; mother: Stat. *Ach.* 1.321–2.

⁹ Deaths: Block 1980; formula: O'Sullivan 2009.

The treatment of one of the *Iliad*'s most famous scenes of family life is particularly interesting. At the end of Book 6, Hector, his wife, Andromache, and their baby son Astyanax (and his nurse) meet at the Scaean Gates in the walls of Troy (Hom. *Il.* 6.390–502). Since his war helmet frightens the boy, Hector takes it off, at once a symbol of Hector's humanity and a premonition of his death at the hands of the superhuman fighter Achilles (see the chapter by Pratt in this volume). Vergil stages reversals. Ascanius—not a baby but still a child—takes off his own helmet to calm the terrified Trojan women, intent on burning their own ships (*Aen.* 5.670–4). Aeneas, about to set off for battle, addresses Ascanius (for the only time in the poem) and kisses him but leaves his helmet on; his inclusion of Hector among the models the boy should follow guarantees that readers will recall the *Iliad* and his remaining fully armed assures them that he will prevail in the final duel with Turnus that follows (*Aen.* 12.432–40; Belfiore 1984: 27–30). There is a fainter echo of the passage in the *Thebaid*, where mothers show their children the shining armor of their fathers, figures of fear under their helmets (Stat. *Theb.* 7.240–2), but it is Silius Italicus who makes the most imaginative use of it in the story of Crista and his six sons, killed fighting Hannibal at Cannae (*Pun.* 10.92–169; Marks 2006). Here, the warrior's helmet appears in the father's name, "crest" or "plume," and its removal is represented by his death in battle. It is true that the sons are themselves warriors and no longer children, let alone babies, but the comparison of Crista to an eagle observing his newborn chicks stresses their relative youth and confirms the link with Astyanax.

As the many references I have made to it already indicate, the *Aeneid* requires special consideration. Immediately recognized as a work of genius, it influenced every heroic epic that followed and much more besides; in Ascanius, it also features a child throughout its twelve books. The hero's son has inspired almost as many divergent responses as the poem itself.¹⁰ He has seemed puzzling and unattractive or a lovely and realistic boy next door, an agent of chaos or an embodiment of better things to come (Rogerson 2005: 6–8). For Mark Petrini, although Ascanius is a centrally significant symbol of the link between Troy and Rome, he is "a peripheral figure with only occasional effect on the narrative" (Petrini 1997: 87). To the contrary, Anne Rogerson argues that a rereading of the text with close attention to Ascanius alters our understanding of the poem (Rogerson 2005). These disagreements must to some extent stem from the fact that Ascanius ages during the course of the poem, changing from the toddler who follows his father with unequal steps from the blazing ruins of Troy to the boy who rides recklessly through the hunt to the youth who kills Numanus Remulus and thus earns the unique patronymic Aenides before Apollo withdraws him from battle (Verg. *Aen.* 2.723–4, 4.156–9, 9.653). His presentation is also complicated by his relationship with Astyanax. Both boys bear two names, with Ascanius/Iulus answering to Scamandrius/Astyanax. In each case,

¹⁰ See especially Petrini 1997: 87–110; Merriam 2002; Newman and Newman 2005: 270–7; Rogerson 2005. My thanks to Alison Keith for telling me about this Cambridge dissertation and to Anne Rogerson herself for generously sending me a copy.

one name is derived from a local river. And Astyanax's mother, Andromache, regards Ascanius as the last memorial and replica of her son, recalling him in eyes, hands, and features and the same age he would have been if he had lived (*Aen.* 3.486–91). But that of course is the telling difference: Astyanax is dead, whereas Ascanius' survival is guaranteed early on by Jupiter himself and his second name, changed from Ilus to Iulus, represents his role as a link between Troy and the Roman world that lies far in the poem's future (*Aen.* 1.267–71).

Ascanius, moreover, is also implicated in some of the most significant stages in the Trojans' journey. The flames that play around his head while he is in his mother's arms convince his grandfather Anchises to abandon Troy, and his joke—he is now speaking—about the Trojans' eating their tables fulfills an omen and assures Aeneas that the Trojans have indeed returned to the land of their ancestors (*Aen.* 2.681–91, 7.112–39). In both instances, Vergil makes use of the notion that children, innocent as they are, can reliably reveal the gods' intentions (Wiedemann 1989: 177–9). On the other hand, their failings in experience and understanding can just as easily lead to disaster. Ascanius and another child, Rhea Silvia, inadvertently ignite the war between Trojans and Italians that dominates the poem's second half. Ascanius shoots a stag, unaware that it is Silvia's pet; grief stricken, the girl calls on her neighbors for help; they gather in arms, spurred on by the Fury Allecto; the fighting begins (*Aen.* 7.479–539). By ascribing responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict in this way, to two children and a malevolent divinity, Vergil neatly avoids blaming either element of what will soon be a united people and so offers his contemporaries a way of reconciling the factions in the civil war from which they had so recently emerged. It is worth noting that another guilty party who would be unlikely to recall a Roman warlord, Queen Amata, is compared to a toy, a spinning top driven into motion by the whips of boys, when she rages through the city in her anger at her daughter's betrothal to Aeneas. Here too child's play has a darker side.

Recent scholarship has stressed that Ascanius' growth from boy to man is uneven and incomplete, a process of development still in question at the end of the poem much as his father's fulfillment of his destiny as a leader is called into question by his slaying of Turnus. In this way, the precise nature of the connection between Troy and Rome is left open for debate. Two related episodes in Book 1 illustrate the problematic quality of ties between past, present, and future. In one remarkable vignette, Aeneas, shipwrecked on the coast near Carthage, meets a young girl in hunting attire, in fact his mother Venus in disguise (*Aen.* 1.313–414). No sooner does he recognize her, however, than Venus turns away and leaves him to lament: "Why do you so often mock your son with misleading appearances, cruel as you are too? Why is it not allowed to join my right hand to yours and to hear and reply in our true voices?" Now, Venus is a goddess as well as a mother (the gap between her and her mortal son is portrayed by the hiatus between *dea* and *ille* in 405); a Roman mother might rival the *paterfamilias* as an authority figure, and in any case Venus immediately wraps Aeneas and his companion Achates in a protective mist and delivers them safely to Dido's city (Leach 1997; Gutting 2009). In general, "Venus genetrix, not pater Anchises, is the parent who insures her son's success" (Farrell

1999: 109). Yet there is no denying Aeneas' heartfelt disappointment at this all too brief and frustrating encounter: the generations have failed to connect, by a handclasp or more emotionally.

The *Aeneid* presents another playful boy whose arrows can cause harm: Venus' son Cupid. Later in the book, after Dido has graciously offered him refuge, Aeneas immediately sends for his son. "All the concern of a loving father was for Ascanius" (*Aen.* 1.646). But Venus is keen to win Dido's love for the Trojan hero and so bids her (other) son Cupid to take on Ascanius' shape and appearance, *pueri puer*, while she lulls the boy to sleep and carries him, cuddled to her breast, to the idyllic groves of Idalia. It is a lovely image. No less attractive is Cupid himself, as he does indeed inspire the widowed queen to love again; the same words that describe Ascanius on his journey recur as Dido holds Cupid on her lap (*fotum gremio*, *Aen.* 1.692; *gremio foveat*, 1.718). Loving father though he is, Aeneas too is fooled by Cupid's imposture. That Aeneas is deceived in both his mother and his son is of course a commentary on his unfitness still for command, an unreadiness soon to be confirmed by his dalliance with Dido; here he is most unlike Odysseus, that master of disguise. But Vergil may also mean readers to reflect on how much hope is placed on children though they are unprepared or unfit to bear that weight. Cupid himself is at one moment Venus' strength, her great power, the only one who can look down on Zeus' weapons, at another a mere instrument of his mother's will, like the gifts he brings to Dido (*Aen.* 1.664–6; *puero donisque*, 1.714). As for Ascanius, he is the second hope of great Troy (*mag-nae spes altera Troiae*, *Aen.* 12.166). What happened to the first? Astyanax was not the only Trojan boy to die—Priam's palace had fifty bedchambers, so much hope for descendants, all gone (*spes tanta nepotum*, *Aen.* 2.503–5). Many children in the Rome of Vergil's time failed to survive to become adults under the best conditions, and the decades of civil war he had lived through were not the best conditions. And even children who grew up might not fulfill their promise, unworthy sons of their fathers like Achilles' son Pyrrhus; this was one motive for the practice of adopting children as adults. Expectations for children were often deceptive. I suspect that the *Aeneid* ends before Ascanius is quite grown to manhood because Vergil was unwilling to be overconfident of Rome's future too.

SEX AND DEATH

Centuries of imperialist war and decades of civil strife made the Romans all too familiar with their child victims; slave children and others outside the citizen community were regularly objects of sexual desire and violence, from which Romans themselves were protected by law. But the conventions of heroic epic, whose central figures conquered both in the bedroom and on the battlefield, persuaded poets to represent the literary children they inherited and invented as more sexually active and attractive than the contemporary citizen children they knew.

Much of heroic epic is taken up with wars, battles, fighting of every kind. Death comes to many, including younger warriors. Indeed, it comes to them above all, because they are still babes in arms, not fully formed or ready to fight. Ascanius is not the only child whose age is left unclear. Similarly, Vergil calls Euryalus a boy, *puer*, before his doomed nighttime mission in Book 9, but never afterward, and Statius' Parthenopaeus is designated as *puer* and *iuvēnis* (youth) within the same few lines.¹¹ These are liminal figures, on the threshold between youth and maturity—as the pun on *vir* (man) in Aeneas' parting words (*virtute puer*, 9.641) to Ascanius suggests—but also sharing male and female features and, in so many cases, about to move from life to death. Parthenopaeus' name may be a compound of the Greek *parthenos* (maiden) and *pais* and so refer to his unmarried mother Atalanta, but it may also be translated as “maiden-boy” or analyzed as *parthen-/ops* (maiden-faced). Achilles, suitably feminized by his mother, can be concealed among the girls on Scyros. The untimely death of these young fighters is a particular form of *mors immatura*, present elsewhere in these poems. Aeneas' trip to the Underworld, accompanied by the weeping and wailing of infants who have lost their share of life at its first threshold, is imitated by Silius Italicus (Verg. *Aen.* 6. 426–9, Sil. *Pun.* 13.547–9). Lucan asks what crimes innocent babies can have committed to warrant condemnation to death (2.104–9). But the warriors' death has an erotic tinge. For one thing, some have already been sexually active despite their youth, Achilles impregnating Deidameia before his departure for Troy, Lapithaon seduced by a nymph while still a boy (Stat. *Theb.* 7.294–304). In addition, sweat and dust are frequent elements of the description of these youths, details that recall the finely formed physiques of athletes who are otherwise naked (Sanna 2008). This was an accepted convention of the Greek culture from which the plots of these poems are derived, but it always retained some power to shock at Rome. Moreover, their portrayals recall still more controversial contemporaries, the *pueri delicati* who figure in the epigrams of Martial and in Statius' *Silvae*, young slaves raised in elite families for a complex of motivations in which sex could always be imagined or alleged to play a role.¹²

The young warriors of Latin heroic echo have more specific connections too. The emperor Domitian is addressed as a young warrior in both the *Thebaid* and *Punica* (Stat. *Theb.* 1.21–2, Sil. *Pun.* 3.606–10)—this is intended as tribute to his extraordinary gifts—and allusions to *pueri delicati* may more pointedly invoke his favorite Eerinus (Vout 2007: 167–212). What more can we say about the interplay of political history and the representation of children and childhood in these poems?

¹¹ Euryalus: Verg. *Aen.* 9.181, 217, 276; Petrini 1997: 21–47. Parthenopaeus: e.g., Stat. *Theb.* 4.249 (*iuvēnis*), 256 (*puer*); 6.628 (*puer*), 632 (*iuvēnis*). Although Scipio took command in his early twenties and is usually called a *iuvēnis*, he recalls that those who opposed his appointment referred to him as a *puer*; Sil. *Pun.* 16.645–62. We may contrast Ovid's practice in *Metamorphoses*, where many children have their age denoted precisely, if poetically. So Arcas, Narcissus, and Hermaphrodite are thrice five years old (2.496–7, 3.351–2, 4.292–5), Daedalus' nephew is twice six (8.241–3), and so on.

¹² Sanna 2004. For the inevitability of erotic overtones in literary representations of *pueri delicati*, see now Asso 2010; Laes 2010; cf. the chapter by Sigismund-Nielsen in this volume.

POLITICAL OVERTONES

Recent historical events supply much of the subject matter for some of these epics, especially the war against Hannibal (for Ennius and Silius Italicus) and the civil war between Caesar and Pompey (for Lucan). These were also topics for historians writing in prose in works available to poets, works they were free to take over or ignore, to supplement or recast, for their own purposes. Representations of children, like others, are governed to a great extent by their parts in the poets' overarching plans.¹³

Silius Italicus' *Punica* presents a family drama featuring Hannibal, his wife Imilce, and their infant son (4.763–822; Bruère 1952; Fucecchi 1992; Augoustakis 2010: 196–213). The Carthaginians, spurred on by Hannibal's enemy Hanno, demand the baby's sacrifice to Moloch, but Hannibal saves him and pledges his undying enmity towards Rome. The practice of infant sacrifice at Carthage was well-known among the Romans, attested as early as Ennius.¹⁴ But Silius' story is seemingly his own invention; no other source supplies the name of Hannibal's wife or reports the existence of his son or offers us anything like Imilce's passionate denunciation of Carthaginian custom. What are his motives? Without doubt, the story, and Imilce's speech in particular, stresses the Carthaginians' barbarity and the stakes in Rome's struggle against them. But there is a familiar literary context too, once again in *Iliad* 6. Whereas Astyanax is frightened by his father's helmet, Hannibal's son, despite his extreme youth, is already grim and warlike in aspect and said (by his father) to be a source of fear and sorrow for others, Roman wives and children. Astyanax's reaction might be regarded as realistic; Hannibal's son's cannot. But we should not imagine that Silius thought any child capable of expressing such resolve, let alone an infant of his own invention. Each shows what is inescapable when they are considered together, that poets' attitudes toward children cannot be easily dissociated from their immediate or larger literary contexts. In this instance, the description is intended to illustrate Hannibal's own implacable hostility toward Rome and the danger Carthage continued to pose even after his defeat. And Astyanax is not the only literary child it invokes. Hannibal's boy makes the third generation of his family to be sworn in as Rome's enemy, so we are invited to compare Hamilcar's grandson with Anchises' and the pledge Hannibal makes with Aeneas' parting counsel to his own young son (Verg. *Aen.* 12.632–40; Bernstein 2010: 380–1). This is notably free from hard feelings toward Turnus or any other Italian enemy. The collocation flatters Rome; the filial fealty of Carthaginians proves as bad as *Punica fides*.

¹³ Note that disregard of the historical record is sometimes matched by a cavalier lack of concern with mythological circumstances, as when Statius has Polynices regret being torn from his children and wife in Thebes—forgetting that they are in fact elsewhere (Stat. *Theb.* 3.374–7, cf. 5.148–51, Shackleton Bailey 2003: 281, n. 10).

¹⁴ *Ann.* fr. 214 Skutsch. Elsewhere in the poem, Gela's mother saved him from sacrifice by substituting another infant only to lose him in battle—the gods are not to be cheated in this way; Sil. *Pun.* 15.464–6.

Real children featured in history too, boy kings above all. In the *Thebaid*, Theodamas is thrown offstride by the honor of replacing Amphiaras as the Argive army's seer (8.256–93). He is like an Achaemenid boy—safer if his father had survived—who chances to take over the throne of Persia. His joy is balanced by fear, his hands too small for the scepter, his head for the diadem. Latin heroic epic presents a number of boy kings who prove as inadequate as rulers as their mythical age-mates do as warriors. Hieronymus succeeds his grandfather as king of Syracuse at fifteen. Unable to command his passions, unbalanced by his elevation to the throne, he is furious and proud, indecent and cruel, until a downfall dooms his innocent sisters too (*Sil. Pun.* 14.85–109). King of Egypt at just ten, Ptolemy XII Auletes connived at the killing of his former patron Pompey at thirteen. Pompey had feared this outcome, mistrusting Ptolemy's youth: "dangerous loyalty requires the years of manhood" (8.281–2); Lucan underlines the gulf between the two by the words *impius... ut Magnum nosset puer*, punning on *puer* and Pompey's cognomen "the Great" (8.679). Another North African, the Berber prince Masinissa, cuts a more favorable figure as he joins the Roman side in the war with Hannibal at sixteen (Augoustakis 2010: 213–21). Although Roman historians generally ascribed this to a series of delicate diplomatic manoeuvres, Silius credits a portent, flames that appear around his head. Thus, linked to Servius Tullius and Ascanius, both young, Masinissa is made to appear Roman before he takes Rome's side; Masinissa's mother underscores the reference to Ascanius by referring to the Romans as the Trojan people (*Dardaniae... gentes*, *Sil. Pun.* 16.129). Other accounts dwell on Masinissa's military contributions; Silius, however, prefers to stress his role as Scipio's advisor and so to prevent him from rivalling his Roman hero. Both portraits of these boy princes may owe something to contemporary political concerns: Lucan's to covertly criticize the youthful tyrant Nero (McCloskey and Phinney 1968), Silius' to foster the Flavian policy of Romanization in North Africa (Ripoll 2003).

SOCIAL CHANGE

Raising *pueri delicati* was just one form of fosterage or surrogate parenting, a particular interest of Latin epic poets of the Flavian period. The treatment of Chiron, Achilles' teacher, is especially revealing. In Valerius Flaccus' account of the departure of the Argo, drawn directly from Apollonius of Rhodes, the centaur holds the baby boy up to witness his father Peleus' departure. When Achilles calls out, Peleus recognizes his voice and stretches out his arms to him; Achilles responds by leaping onto Peleus' neck and father and son share a farewell embrace (*Val. F.* 1.255–70). Statius' *Achilleid* puts the emphasis elsewhere, on Achilles' mother Thetis and on Chiron himself instead of Peleus. The boy hero looks like his mother, his connection to the immortal gods (1.164–5, 256–7); Poseidon further undermines Peleus' role by saying that his great deeds will make his mother think she had borne him to Jupiter (1.91). But Chiron's nurture is made to seem at least as significant as the nature Achilles derives from his

mother. When Thetis pays a parental visit to Chiron's cave, Achilles chooses to sleep next to him and *assuetaque pectora*, "the breast he is used to," rather than with his mother (1.195–7), and he later devotes a long speech to the ways "the centaur undertook and shaped from birth [his] raw rudiments and tender years" (1.477–9).¹⁵ His was no ordinary diet—"that father of his" (*ille pater*, 2.102) had him rip the rough flesh of lions and the entrails of a half-alive she-wolf—nor training regimen: half-horse as he was, Chiron chased him to instill speed and endurance and taught him to walk on thin ice to develop a light tread. Nor did Chiron neglect training in music and for war (2.94–167). No wonder it is as "half-beast Chiron's fosterling, grandson of sea and sky" that Odysseus chooses to address Achilles when he is discovered among the girls on Scyrus (1.868): Statius has gone to some trouble to elide his biological parents from the picture.

It is tempting to explain this interest in fosterage and surrogacy as a consequence of Statius' personal history (Fantham 1999).¹⁶ Like Chiron, his father was a teacher, the educator of others' children, and Statius himself was the foster father of a slave boy whose death was the occasion of a poem that contributes to his reputation as "the Latin poet of the child's life" (*Silvae* 5.5; Fortgens 1959). The last few lines are especially moving:

He was mine, mine. I took him up as he was falling on the ground and cuddled him as he was oiled with a holiday herb, and implanted him into life as he demanded breath he had not experienced before with trembling cries. . . . While you were alive, I wanted no sons. As soon as you were born, you embraced my breast and clove to me. I showed you words and sounds and solved your complaints and hidden hurts, leaned down as you crawled on the ground to kiss you and . . . summoned sweet sleep as I caressed you in my lap. Your first word was my name, your play—my laughter, your joy—my face. (5.5.69–87)

But there seems to be more involved here than Statius' personal views alone. Among the *Silvae*, poems for the slave foster children of others testify to the deep emotions such quasi-parental relationships could arouse (2.1, 6). More pertinently, Statius' poems do not invariably regard surrogacy as good or successful. Crotopus' daughter Psamathe has a son by Apollo and, fearing her father's wrath, hands him over to a shepherd to raise. This does not end well: "as he stretched out without a care on the green earth, drinking in the sky with his mouth wide open," he was torn apart by maddened dogs. The story serves to explain the origins of a serpent with a girl's face and breasts who is responsible for the deaths of newborns (Stat. *Theb.* 1.557–623). Thus, fostering comes to be fatal to natural children as well as to the shepherd's charge.

¹⁵ The phrase *assuetaque pectora* may recall the etymology of Achilleus from *a*-privative and *cheilos*, "lip," and the tradition that he was not suckled at a woman's breast.

¹⁶ Similarly, Ovid's interest in stories in which mothers prove unable to save their children from superior force is said to stem from the impact of the proscriptions by the triumvirs during his impressionable childhood and early adulthood; Lateiner 2006: 199.

There is more to be said about Hypsipyle and the baby Opheltes, whose story takes up much of Book 5 of the *Thebaid* (Augoustakis 2010: 30–91). After abandoning her own twin sons by Jason on Lemnos, Hypsipyle serves Lycurgus, king of Nemea, as nurse for his baby son Opheltes. But she forgets the boy in the excitement of relating her past to the leaders of the Argive expedition against Thebes. He falls asleep in the grass, “tired by the childish things he has been doing so long” (5.499–504), and is killed, accidentally, by the tail of a passing serpent. Even Mother Earth, it seems, is inadequate as a caregiver (Newlands 2006: 207). Hypsipyle hears his dying cry and runs to help, again and again calling words the baby knows, but in vain, arriving too late even to draw in his last breath. She can only hold his body, battered and torn, to her breast and mourn him, using the name by which he will be worshipped as a hero henceforth:

Archemorus, sweet likeness of the children who have deserted me... my joy, I left you just now at play, trampling the grass as you hurried forward in your crawl. Where is your starry face, where your unformed words with their indistinct sounds, and laughs and gurgles only I could comprehend? How often I would tell you about Lemnos and the Argo and lull you to sleep with my long sad story. So I soothed you, unhappy as I was, and gave you a mother's breasts. Now I am bereaved and my milk flows in vain, dripping unfruitfully into your wounds. (5.608–19)

Hypsipyle's sorrow and the detailed description of the dead boy that accompanies and fuels it may remind us of Statius' poems for dead foster children in *Silvae*. In any case, her remorse does not satisfy Opheltes' parents. She is rescued, however, by the fortuitous arrival of her sons, now strapping young men, and by Amphiaraus' revelation that all this was the will of the gods. (Here biological children save a surrogate parent from the consequences of her carelessness, and the loss of a foster child is recompensed twofold, by a pair of boys.) Book 6 then begins with no fewer than 295 lines on Opheltes' funeral (Fortgens 1934).

If surrogate parenting looms so large in Statius' work and if (despite his own happy family associations) the practice is often problematical, there may be more at stake than the personal perspectives of one poet. Neil Bernstein (2008, 2009a, 2009b) devoted a number of recent publications to arguing that in fact debates about nature and nurture were particularly prominent at this time, toward the end of the first century CE, and reflected elite responses to broad-based social changes in the early empire. This was a period when the Roman aristocracy was no longer able to reproduce itself, biologically or socially. The emperors had established themselves as the sole or at least the most significant sources of high status, far outweighing the traditional claims of birth and family. For them, an old and proud pedigree might appear as a hindrance, leading as it could to a threat to their preeminence; they preferred to favor those who recommended themselves by ability, wealth, or unquestioned loyalty. Even the old family hierarchy was in question; with the emperor able to claim the title of *pater patriae* (father of the fatherland) and with imperial legislation trumping *patria potestas* in Augustus' laws on marriage and the family, even the dominance of elite males within their own households

was undermined. This would be a lot to read into Statius alone.¹⁷ But other writers, such as the historian Tacitus and the educator and rhetorician Quintilian, also display some unease about the influence of slave childminders, and Bernstein (2009b) pointed to similar preoccupations in the declamatory exercises that were so fundamental to the training of boys of the elite. It might be asked why this debate had to wait for over one hundred years after Augustus first imposed the emperor's authority. There is an answer, however: the Flavian emperors had their own insecurities about biological family ties, from the fact that they could not base their rule on lineal descent from Augustus or his immediate successors to their difficulties in birthing heirs for their own dynasty. These anxieties may have inspired the speculations of others or at least created new space for such issues to be discussed.

But it would give the wrong impression to imply that Statius and the other poets of Latin heroic epic wrote about children only as a means to make points or enter debates. As in Lucretius, there is ample evidence that they paid attention to children and often—certainly not always—liked what they saw. Consider the tender descriptions of sleeping children in the *Aeneid* and the *Achilleid*.¹⁸ It is perhaps both surprising and symptomatic of Roman regard for children that the richest descriptions of children in their literature occur in poets who had none of their own.

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¹⁷ "An impressionistic reading of selected sources, no matter how persuasive, leaves . . . room for disagreement": Golden 1990: 92 on Wiedemann 1989. On the Augustan marriage laws, see the chapter by McGinn in this volume.

¹⁸ Verg. *Aen.* 1.691–4, where Austin 1971: 207 refers to the "magic softness" of the lines; Stat. *Ach.* 1.228–31.

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CHAPTER 13

THE SOCIALIZATION OF ROMAN CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION

FROM birth to adulthood Roman children became socialized; that is, they internalized social and cultural processes and structures so that they could take up their roles as adults, who would themselves, in turn, transmit social and cultural norms and practices to succeeding generations. Socialization is thus the term used to describe the ways children were able to negotiate and define a place for themselves in the world in which they lived,¹ a process often referred to as “primary socialization” (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 150–1).² They did this by observing and responding to, whether consciously or unconsciously, the physicality of their surroundings. Both a child’s domestic environment and the religious, social, and economic fabric of urban centers played important roles in socialization. Children in the Roman world also came into contact with a wide range of individuals from an early age, including nurses, slaves, pedagogues, mothers, fathers, siblings, extended family, masters (if they were slaves), family friends, and acquaintances of different ages, depending on their social and economic status (Harlow and Laurence 2002: 43). Similarly, these various individuals helped to shape a child’s

¹ James and Prout 1997: 8; Bossard 1948. Rather than considering children as passive agents in the socialization process, it is now recognized that in all societies children should be considered active agents or “social actors” who also help to shape the society around them; Prout 2000: 2. Valentine 2011: 356 argued that children’s agency is neither a “straightforwardly a personal capacity or attribute” nor “the same as competence or capability.” Instead, agency highlights “the differences between children” and is “inflected with the social, reflecting the hierarchies in which they [children] lived.” Unfortunately, agency is very difficult to study from the extant ancient evidence.

² “Primary socialization is the first socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society.”

beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Although formal education, beginning around the age of seven for many Roman children and, for some, continuing through to early adulthood, was “an instrument of socialization and social mobility” (Rawson 2003: 150; cf. Morgan 2011; see also Bloomer in this volume), this chapter is more concerned with the processes and structures that did not follow a set curriculum. It will map out some of the influences that helped Roman children to become socialized into their particular status and gender roles in Roman society during the Republic and early Empire.

No Roman authors wrote in detail about the processes involved in the socialization of children outside the areas of education. However, it is clear from anecdotal evidence that they supported general theories about childrearing. During both the republican and imperial periods, playwrights, medical writers, rhetoricians, and philosophers all advocated that it was the duty of adults to help shape the lives of their children from a young age. The earliest practice of shaping a child began with swaddling (Plin. *HN* 7.2–3; French 1986: 69–84; Garnsey 1991: 56–59). According to Soranus, babies should be swaddled by their midwives after birth for a period of about two months both to stop them ruining their eyesight by rubbing their eyes and to ensure that they begin to develop a healthy body with strong limbs (*Gyn.* 2.14–5). Continuing recommendations found in the Hippocratic Corpus (*On Regimen* 1.19), medical writers also encouraged midwives to bathe and massage the bodies and limbs of young babies in between periods of swaddling (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.32–5). As children became more perceptive to the world around them, it was important that adults continue the molding process by overseeing their mental and social development. Seneca advocated in his philosophical treatise *On Anger* that children (*pueri*) should be guided properly from an early age so that they would not develop habits that would make them prone to fiery temperaments (*de Ira* 2.20.1–2). To achieve a well-balanced character, children should not have their spirits crushed, nor should they be overindulged (*de Ira* 2.21.1–6). The importance of laying such foundations appears in republican literature as early as Plautus. In the *Mostellaria* Plautus used a building metaphor to express the idea that children should be guided from an early age and be exposed to the types of behaviors that would establish good foundations (Plaut. *Mostell.* 91–151).³

EARLY EXPERIENCES

According to Beryl Rawson (2003: 95), “The procreation of children was the explicit aim of Roman marriage” (see also Aul. Gell. *NA* 4.3.2; 1.6.1–8). Roman children were introduced indirectly to this idea from an early age, often through the events and celebrations

³ Quintilian 1. *pr.* 4–5 also believed that children’s educational experiences should be shaped by adults. When discussing the educational practices that precede a rhetorical education, Quintilian advocated that it was necessary for children to receive the type of education that laid essential foundations (*fundamenta*).

associated with the birth of a child. Children must have been aware of the preparations made for the impending birth of, for example, a sibling, and they perhaps watched or even helped with the preparations. An area of the house or apartment would have been set aside and furnished with a birthing stool and two couches by a midwife (*obstetrix*). The midwife would then have prepared olive oil, sea sponges, and bandages and gathered barley groats and a clod of earth and perhaps also an apple, a quince, a lemon, melon, and cucumber (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.2–3). Children would have sensed the enormity of the occasion as adult females not normally resident in the *domus* arrived for the important event (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.5; Laes 2011: 57–8; Rawson 2003: 101).⁴ As a parturient mother went into labor, children may have sensed that the atmosphere changed from excitement to anxiety as they were ushered out of the apartment or moved to another part of the house in the company of their carers or relatives or even their father.⁵ Older children may have helped to pray to particular gods to help protect both mother and her child. Although Juno Lucina was the goddess most commonly associated with childbirth in Rome from the republican through to the imperial periods (Varro *Ling.* 5.69; Stat. *Silv.* 4.8.22–3; Ov. *Met.* 9.294–7), a number of other deities could be invoked including the Carmentes (Varro cited by Aul. Gell. *NA* 16.16.4; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 56, *Mor.* 278 b–c, Diana Lucifera, Diespater, Mena, Postverta, and Prorsa. Opis was summoned to protect a newborn as he or she was placed on the ground, Vaticanus ensured his or her first cry, and Levana raised him or her up off the ground so that he or she could be bathed and swaddled (August. *Civ. Dei* 4.11; Garnsey 1991: 54).⁶

Children in a Roman *familia* may also have realized from an early age that the birth of an infant was important to the whole community. Some would have helped their parturient mothers to prepare offerings of flowers or herbs to take to the Temple of Juno Lucina on the Esquiline Hill at the *Matronalia* on March 1, or they may have observed their fathers also worshipping the goddess.⁷ Children would have also participated in feasts and gift giving at home on the first of March (Plaut. *Mil.* 691; Tert. *Idol.* 14.6; Dig. 24.1.31.8). When Terentia, wife of Marcus Tullius Cicero, gave birth to her son in 65 BCE, her daughter Tullia would have been about thirteen years old. Tullia had been betrothed to Gaius Piso Frugi in 67 BCE (Cic. *Att.* 1.3). As a young girl herself approaching puberty

⁴ According to Soranus, Roman mothers were assisted in childbirth by a female midwife and three female assistants. Occasionally male doctors may also have been present at the birth, or they may have been brought in if there were complications. It is likely that other females associated with a mother, such as family and friends, would also have provided advice, comfort, and support.

⁵ Fathers, if they were alive, and husbands were not present for the birth but may have been around the *domus*; Sen. *Ep.* 117.30; Suet. *Aug.* 94.5. Juvenal 14.165–9 describes children living in the countryside playing with a *vernula* (home-born slave), while their mother, who had recently given birth, was lying in bed.

⁶ A midwife or other female relatives of the pregnant woman would have been the first to ensure the baby was breathing and healthy after its birth (Varro *de vita populi Romani* frg. 81). See also Dasen in this volume.

⁷ *Matronalia*, Ov. *Fast.* 3.253–8; Boëls-Janssen 1993: 314; fathers Ps.-Acr. *Hor. Odes* 3.8.1; *ILS* 3101; 9230a; Schulz 2006: 55–7.

and marriage, Tullia would undoubtedly have helped to support her mother through her pregnancy and the birth of her brother,⁸ perhaps praying with her mother to Diana during the delivery (Hor. *Odes* 3.22.1–4) or accompanying her on August 13 in the procession from the Temple of Diana on the Aventine to the sacred grove of the goddess at Nemi, carrying torches and votive offerings before or after the birth (Prop. 2.32.8–10; Ov. *Fast.* 3.269–70). Tullia may have been present as the midwife helped to deliver her brother and witnessed her father ordering that his son be cared for. The young Marcus would have then been rubbed with salt and bathed to remove any traces of afterbirth, swaddled, and fed honey and water (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.11–17).⁹

The birth of a Roman child was celebrated both within the *domus* and among the wider community. Tullia's upbringing by her mother and other female family and friends would have made her aware of her future role as a mother, and she would have understood that the next week of her brother's life was potentially dangerous.¹⁰ Other children in a *familia*, excluded from the birth because of age or sex, whether slave or free, would have been introduced for the first time to, or had reinforced, particular beliefs and practices followed by the *paterfamilias* of the household as he protected his wife and new child. They would have seen the *dii familiares* (household gods), the Penates and Vesta, the Lares and the *genius* of the *paterfamilias*, honored and thanked on several occasions in conjunction with the birth. They would have become aware of a range of deities and spirits who either protected or threatened the newborn (Rawson 2003: 110). Children would have observed the *paterfamilias* greeting family friends as they came to pass on their congratulations (Aul. Gell. *NA* 12.1.1–4), and they themselves may have helped to decorate the door of their house or apartment with laurel wreaths, a practice used to announce the birth of a baby (Stat. *Silv.* 4.8.35–40; Juv. 6.78–81; 9.84–6).¹¹ Juvenal suggests that celebrations were held in the narrow streets outside dwellings (Juv. 6.78). In the houses of the wealthy, a *lectisternium* (a couch and a meal) was set up for Picumnus and Pilumnus or Juno and Hercules (Varro *ap.* Servius *ad Aen.* 10.76; Servius *ad Ecl.* 4.62), announcing the birth to visitors attending the house for the morning *salutatio*.¹²

⁸ Younger women were undoubtedly assisted by their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts. Not all women would have had a mother alive, such as Plin. *Ep.* 8.10. Aulus Gellius *NA* 12.1.5 notes a mother assisting her daughter and describes her arguing for a wet nurse for the child (see Parkin in this volume).

⁹ Milk was prescribed on the second day of life; see Parkin in this volume.

¹⁰ Approximately 30% of babies died during their first year, 8% in their first month; see again Parkin in this volume. Mothers also died in childbirth much more frequently than they do today; Rawson 2003: 103. It has been estimated that seventeen mothers in every thousand died in childbirth: Laes 2011: 50–6; cf. Parkin 1992: 103–5.

¹¹ Letters were sent to friends further afield (e.g., Cic. *Att.* 1.2). Statius, however, reprimands Menecrates, the man to whom the poem is addressed, for not informing him personally about the birth; Stat. *Silv.* 4.8.35–45. Children in the households receiving such news also became aware of the importance of a birth as their parents or masters lit a special fire on their own household altar.

¹² August. *Civ. Dei* 6.9.2. Picumnus and Pilumnus may have been replaced later by Juno and Hercules; Köves-Zulauf 1990: 196f; Rawson 1991: 14. See also Hänninen 2005: 56.

Preparations for further rituals and celebrations would have continued in the hope that the newborn would survive his or her first week of life.¹³ In Roman society, as in Greece, a child was acknowledged publicly a week after birth because many neonates would die during this period (Arist. *Hist. Ann.* 588a).¹⁴ Entry into the *familia* and Roman society was confirmed by a ceremony called the *lustratio*, which took place on the eighth day after birth for a boy and the ninth for a girl (Macrob. *Sat.* 1.16.36).¹⁵ On the *dies lustricus* (lustral day), a child was named, and both the child and its mother were purified in a ceremony presided over by Mater Matuta or Carmenta (see Dasen in this volume). Maternal grandmothers, aunts, and uncles may have played important roles: not all children would have had living grandmothers or other relatives, and even fathers might not be present due to war or their own deaths. On receiving its name, a new child was then recognized as a member of the father's *familia*.¹⁶ Protective amulets may have been given to a child on the *dies lustricus* to encourage good health and to protect a child from the evil eye and other spirits such as the Lamiae, Gelloudes, and Mormones (Ov. *Fast.* 6.132–68; Lucil. frg. 484; Hor. *AP* 339–40; Richlin 1997: 215–6; Dasen 2009: 207–8). It is likely that memory of the *dies lustricus* was preserved by adults and older child attendees, who may have reminded younger family members of their *dies lustricus* at other gatherings such as birthdays, coming of age ceremonies, betrothals, and weddings.

It is uncertain whether slave children underwent a formal *lustratio* after their birth. Perhaps some form of purification ceremony was held to protect the child, the mother, and other members of the *familia*, but any rituals and celebrations would be subject to approval by the master of the slave woman who had just given birth.¹⁷ Perhaps the *lustratio*, like the ceremony of the *toga virilis*,¹⁸ was a ritual aspired to by *liberti* for their free-born children: members of this social group sometimes depicted their sons who died prematurely with a *bulla*, a symbol of their freeborn status (e.g., P. Servilius Globulus, *CIL* 6.26410; Kleiner 1977: no. 71).¹⁹ Slave children within the house may have assisted with the preparations surrounding births and their associated celebrations, and the events of the *dies lustricus* may have reinforced social hierarchies within the household.

¹³ Although the *paterfamilias* was legally responsible for accepting a child, it is likely that the decision to raise a child lay with both the father and the mother and perhaps other relatives: see Laes 2011: 64–5; Rawson 1991: 12–3; Harlow and Laurence 2002: 38–9. For infanticide and exposure, see Evans Grubbs in this volume and references cited there.

¹⁴ As Parkin notes in his chapter, Plutarch also states that until the dried end of the umbilical cord dropped off the child's body on the seventh day, it looked more like a plant than an animal (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 102; *Mor.* 288 B–E).

¹⁵ There is no definitive evidence to explain the gender distinction (Rawson 1991: 14), though Plutarch offers a couple of explanations (*Quaest. Rom.* 102, 288 B–E) including the observation that females matured more rapidly than males and the existence of a gendered arithmetical preference. Cf. the chapters by Dasen and Parkin in this volume.

¹⁶ Unless the child was illegitimate. If the child was not born of a legal Roman marriage, it would take the *nomen* of its mother.

¹⁷ Dasen 2009: 208 discussed inscriptional evidence, but this is inconclusive.

¹⁸ Pliny the Younger *Ep.* 2.14.6 makes it clear that slaves did not assume the *toga virilis*.

¹⁹ On the *bulla*, see Larsson Lovén in this volume.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

All children in Roman society, regardless of social class, had a biological mother and father. For various social and economic reasons such as death, divorce, and remarriage and also because of war, political life, or the need to earn a wage, the experiences individual children shared with their parents would have varied. Legally, all children born of a legitimate Roman marriage were in the power (*patria potestas*) of their father (the *paterfamilias*),²⁰ though it is clear that mothers played important roles: Terentia, wife of Marcus Tullius Cicero, for example, was a central figure in the lives of both her children Tullia and Marcus (Treggiari 2007: 157–61); and the mother of Seneca the Younger administered the property of her children admirably after the death of her husband (Sen. *Helv.* 14.3). Many mothers also played a role in the education of their children (Tac. *Dial.* 28.4–6). Although children in a legitimate Roman marriage were under the *patria potestas* of their father, giving him financial responsibility for them and control of their property, Roman law from the second century CE increasingly recognized the rights of mothers (Evans Grubbs 2005a: 36–7). Not only could mothers petition for custody after divorce because a father was abusive or morally unfit (Ulpian *Dig.* 43.30.1.3), but children were also allowed to petition as heirs if their mother died without a will (Just. *Inst.* 3.3–14).

Until the mid-second century CE, fathers could also dissolve the marriages of their children in *potestas*. After this time children could legally appeal: from the Antonine period, the law ensured that a harmonious marriage was not broken up against a couple's wishes, protecting the interests of daughters in particular (Evans Grubbs 2005b: 112–23). In extreme situations *patria potestas* gave a father the right of life and death over his children or the authority to send them into exile when they had reached adulthood (Saller 1991: 149; 1994). *Patria potestas* was a legal power, and young children might have had a vague idea about its implications from stories featuring *exempla* from Rome's remote past. The actions of historical figures such as Titus Manlius were often used to socialize children (Van der Blom 2010: 61–148). In Livy's account, although Titus Manlius defeated his Latin enemy in single combat, demonstrating his *virtus* on the battlefield, he did so only by defying an order of his general, who was also his father, Titus Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus. To restore discipline, Torquatus felt it necessary to put aside his innate love for his son and to have him executed in front of the soldiers (Livy 8.7.15–7). Although this story might have been useful for foreigners to come to terms with *patria potestas* (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.26.4; Shaw 2001: 56–77), fathers perhaps used this story because it also reinforced the importance of discipline and respect for authority. Above all, it illustrated the importance of respect for *pietas*.

²⁰ If a child's paternal grandfather was still alive, legally he possessed power over both his son and grandchild.

Pietas was the term that encompassed the dutiful respect shown by the Romans towards their gods, the state, and members of their family (Cicero *Nat. Deor.* 1.116; *Rep.* 6.16; *Off.* 2.46; Saller 1991: 146–51; 1998). This was a concept that children would have been socialized to understand and respect from a young age. Between parent and child *pietas* functioned as a form of reciprocal dutiful affection (Saller 1994: 102–53; Bradley 2000: 297–8; Evans Grubbs 2011), and this combination of “duty” and “affection” helps us to understand how the Roman elite viewed and expressed their relationship with their children. Parents raised and socialized their children with the intention of making them into exemplary Roman citizens. Exemplary Roman citizens achieved *gloria* and a range of other qualities, including *virtus*, *gravitas*, *honos*, *fides*, and *dignitas*, which were attributed to historical figures who were held up as role models (Van der Blom 2010: 14–5). Children were expected to follow the *exempla* set by these figures so that they themselves would become role models for future generations. Cicero reminisces in 54 BCE that he had desired from boyhood to excel and to be more prominent than all others (Cic. *Q. Fr.* 3.5.4). To achieve these goals, Roman parents employed, as we will see, a range of non-kin and extended family caregivers and educators to help raise and socialize their children.

Good Roman parents took an active interest in the lives of their children, helping to reinforce moral and social mores particularly when their children were approaching puberty and entering into adulthood.²¹ As Plutarch stressed in his treatise on the behavior of Roman public figures, and as Augustus himself reinforced among his grandchildren and adopted sons, public image mattered in Roman society (Plut. *Mor.* 800E). Parents of upper-class children were therefore also expected to be role models because they were the transmitters of cultural memory and the guardians of the *mos maiorum*. So Agricola, for example, learned about moral integrity and self-control by observing the behavior of his mother Julia Procilla (Tac. *Agr.* 4.2–3). Cicero, despite his commitments to the senate and law courts, believed that it was his duty to achieve great things politically and intellectually so that his son Marcus could inherit his glory. However, inheritance was not enough. Cicero expected Marcus to demonstrate that he had learned by example so that he could imitate both his father and the *maiores* (Cic. *Off.* 1.78; 2.44–5).²² It was important for Marcus himself to carry on the senatorial family tradition that Cicero had established. Cicero certainly seems to have had his son around often, letting him, for example, observe the process of writing a letter from around the age of six.²³ Cicero was interested in the education of his son at least from this age, providing various

²¹ The ideal was always direct parental involvement: for example, Cornelia, mother of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Cic. *Brut.* 211; Plut. *Tib. Gracch.* 1.3–5; Cato the Elder and his son, Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 20.1–7.

²² In the *de Officiis*, written in 44 BCE for his son Marcus, then an *adulescens* of 21, Cicero reinforces the importance of winning a military posting and of remembering the *maiores* who distinguished themselves as soldiers. On family *exempla*, see Treggiari 2003: 157–9.

²³ Young Marcus when himself learning to write in Greek in 59 BCE was also allowed to send his own greetings to Titus Pomponius Atticus, a close family friend. See Cic. *Att.* 2.9.4, 2.12.4. Again in 59 BCE, Cic. *Att.* 5.9.3.

teachers throughout Marcus' life (Cic. *Att.* 14.16.3) and, on occasion, seeking to join the lessons himself, perhaps to reinforce that intellectual pursuits were worthy of both boys and men of senatorial status.²⁴

The letters Cicero wrote to Atticus in conjunction with his proconsulship of Cilicia (51–50 BCE) give an indication of the socializing experiences the son and nephew of a proconsul and legate might have been exposed to outside the *domus* during the late Republic.²⁵ Marcus, aged fourteen, and his cousin Quintus (son of Quintus Tullius Cicero), aged fifteen, were part of Cicero's entourage. During the journey to the province, the boys would have seen how Roman officials were greeted as they entered towns en route to Cilicia, and they would have observed the importance of oratory as they witnessed Cicero putting his skills to great use when addressing crowds (Cic. *Att.* 5.13.1, 5.14.2). Cicero, who wanted to maintain his good name amongst both the general population and his hosts, was very proud that he treated provincial communities with respect, and undoubtedly this was reinforced to Marcus in particular. Although Cicero did not want to govern the province for an extended period of time, he would have stressed to the boys that this was an important duty and that his own dedication to the task was an excellent example of his virtue and self-control (Cic. *Att.* 5.10.2–3, 5.14.2, 5.15.1). Cicero, in his letters, discusses aspects of Roman law and politics, and the boys may have been part of similar conversations. The boys were not old enough for military combat,²⁶ so during the period when Cicero and Quintus senior were fighting with the army they were guests of King Deiotarus of Galatia where they experienced life as guests of a foreign ruler in the east, perhaps for the first time without their parents (Cic. *Att.* 5.17.3). They would also have witnessed the cooperation between Cicero and his good friend Atticus as both took care of each other's business interests in Italy and Asia (e.g., Cic. *Att.* 5.9.2, 5.13.2). Cicero recognized that competition for excellence amongst elite males was intense, and that it was important to prepare sons and male relatives for such a climate by giving them the opportunity to observe and participate in the activities associated with a provincial governor.²⁷

Roman parents or guardians helped their sons to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood by a physical and symbolic change of dress. Usually by the time a boy celebrated his seventeenth birthday he had exchanged his *toga praetexta*, the toga worn by children with a purple border, for the *toga virilis*, the white toga worn by adult males (Harlow and Laurence 2002: 67). Once a boy had assumed the *toga virilis*, his

²⁴ In 54 BCE Cicero wrote to Atticus twice requesting that his freedman Dionysius be sent to tutor Marcus and Cicero himself; Cic. *Att.* 4.15.10, 4.18.5. Cicero also wrote to his brother Quintus for permission to tutor his nephew; Cic. *Q. fr.* 2.14.2. See also Späth 2010.

²⁵ Marcus Cicero Senior was proconsul, and his brother Quintus Senior was legate.

²⁶ Neither boy had made the transition to adulthood by being awarded the *toga virilis*. Quintus would enter adult status in 50 BCE (Cic. *Att.* 5.20.9) and Marcus in 49 (Cic. *Att.* 9.19.1).

²⁷ Marcus, it seems, also respected the wishes of his father, though we only have later evidence pointing directly to this. For example, Marcus followed Cicero's instruction to stop attending classes with Gorgias in the summer of 44, not wishing to question his father's judgment, at least formally; Cic. *Fam.* 16.21.6; Plut. *Cic.* 24.5–7. For family conflicts, see Dixon 1997.

name was added to the census list, and he became a *iuvenis* and an adult citizen. He could henceforth vote and be called up for service in times of war (Nicolet 1980: 93; Aul. Gell. *NA* 10.28).²⁸ Although the ceremony could be held at any time during the year (e.g., Octavian's ceremony took place on October 18, *CIL* 10.8375) many boys celebrated their transition to manhood publicly on March 17 at the festival of Liber, where they dedicated their *bullae* to the household gods and in their new togas accompanied their fathers, or their mothers if their father was dead, to the forum (Pers. 5.30–1; Prop. 4.1.131–2; Ov. *Fast.* 3.771–90). To Pliny the Younger, the importance of this occasion was equal to that of marriage, entering public office, and significant acts of patronage such as dedicating a building (Plin. *Ep.* 10.116). Nicolaus of Damascus in his biography of Augustus gives us an idea of the impact this ceremony had on both the boys undergoing the ritual and, by extension, on children watching the ceremony. He describes the young Octavian entering the forum, where a crowd of onlookers gazed upon him in admiration and then clapped for him enthusiastically as he sacrificed to the gods (4.8–10). From the time of Augustus, the ceremony took place in the Emperor's own spectacular forum in front of the temple of Mars Ultor (Cass. Dio. 55.10.1–8), where a gallery full of famous Romans would have made a young boy even more aware of his future role as a Roman adult citizen and father.²⁹ The event was then celebrated with a dinner and presents (Harlow and Laurence 2002: 68).

All free female children were socialized to aspire to marriage and children, to manage households, and to fulfill various religious duties befitting Roman *matronae*. They too were expected to learn various beliefs and practices that conformed to traditional Roman values so that, even before marriage, they could be praised in similar terms to that of Minicia Marcella:

She had not yet reached the age of fourteen, and yet she combined the wisdom of age and the dignity of womanhood with the sweetness of childhood and the modesty of girlhood. (Plin. *Ep.* 5.16.1–2)³⁰

Normally, it would have been customary for mothers to foster the development of such values so that their daughters would grow into exemplary Roman women. As married *matronae* they were expected to exhibit, for example, their *pudicitia* (feminine virtue) and *fecunditas* (fecundity; Livy 42.34.3); *modestia* (discretion) and *ingenium* (natural strength of character; Cic. *Q. fr.* 1.3.3); *temperantia* (moral self-control); and *constantia* (consistency or strength of character; Plin. *Ep.* 5.16.3–4).

²⁸ *Praetextati* were normally conscripted into the army below the age of seventeen only when Rome was under threat from enemies such as Hannibal; Livy 22.57.9–10; Val. Max. 7.6.1, 3.1.1.

²⁹ Although Rome was the ideal place for the ceremony to take place for elite children, it was also held elsewhere; see, e.g., Cic. *Att.* 5.20.9; Plin. *Ep.* 10.116.

³⁰ Minicia's mother is not mentioned in the letter, only her father and sister. Therefore, her mother may have been dead. Her epitaph gives her age at death as slightly younger: twelve years, eleven months, and seven days (*ILS* 1030; *CIL* 6.16631).

Seneca also reminded Helvia that she must step in and assist her granddaughter by fulfilling the role of her deceased mother so that she would learn from the best role model while young and impressionable (*Helv.* 18.8). Mothers were supposed to ensure their daughters spoke properly, behaved properly, and developed good *mores*. It seems clear, however, that parents, extended family, and friends were influential in the lives of young girls, particularly when betrothals and marriages were being arranged (Dixon 1988: 62–3). Girls learned from observing other female figures. One of the few direct examples we have of this process comes from Plutarch when he is describing the actions of his deceased two-year-old daughter Timoxena. He illustrates how the child both interacted with her caregivers (in this case her nurse) and learned through experience (her own breastfeeding) and observation (other children in the household being breastfed): her father observed that Timoxena would often ask her nurse to offer her breast to visiting infants and to inanimate objects such as toys (Plut. *Mor.* 608d).

Most Roman girls experienced their first marriage in their mid-to-late teens, with betrothal marking an important formal step on the path toward adulthood (Harlow and Laurence 2002: 56–60; 2010; Hersch 2011: 39–51). Couples who under Roman law could form a *matrimonium iustum* because they possessed *conubium* (the capacity to marry legally: see Hersch 2011: 19) were usually betrothed through an agreement made between the father or guardian of the young girl and her prospective husband (Gaius *Inst.* 3.89–93; Treggiari 1991: 170–80). The consent of all parties seems to have been required by law, though they did not have to be present at the ratification (Ulpian *Dig.* 23.1.7, 23.1.18; Treggiari 1991: 146–7). Tullia was betrothed for the first time at the age of thirteen, while T. Pomponius Atticus, good friend of Cicero, began to look for a husband for his daughter Attica when she was six (Cic. *Att.* 13.21a.4).³¹ Young girls probably had little say in the choice of their first marriage partner, and it is likely that they were socialized to view their acceptance as an expression of *pietas*. Unfortunately, we have no direct evidence of how young girls felt about betrothal or marriage (Harlow and Laurence 2002: 59). Betrothals were celebrated at a gathering called the *sponsalium*. Rings may have been sent by one or both parties beforehand or exchanged at the *sponsalium* itself (Plin. *HN* 9.117; Tert. *Apol.* 6.4; Treggiari 1991: 148–9; Hersch 2011: 41–3). The *sponsalium* was held by the father of the bride: the groom was the invited guest of honor, and both family and *amici* attended (Plin. *Ep.* 1.9.1–2; Sen. *Tranq.* 12.4; Suet. *Aug.* 53.3). Children accompanied their parents to this event. For example, at the betrothal party held in honor of his future son-in-law Crassipes, Cicero laments that his ten-year-old nephew Quintus was absent because he was ill (Cic. *Q. fr.* 2.5.3). Thus, both girls and boys were present at both ceremonial and social gatherings that celebrated important stages of life. They would have gained firsthand knowledge of rituals and proceedings,

³¹ Dixon 1988: 62–3; Treggiari 1991: 127–38 discussed the role of females in finding suitable marriage partners, including Tullia's second marriage in the absence of Cicero. For girls being betrothed at younger ages, see Harlow and Laurence 2002: 59–60.

experienced the excitement of such auspicious occasions, and noticed the pride of parents, relatives, and close friends of the family. Many may have imagined their own future ceremonies and celebrations.

NON-KIN CAREGIVERS AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

In Roman society the use of non-kin caregivers was a common cultural practice: children, particularly those of the upper classes, were entrusted to *nutrices* (wet nurses),³² *educatores*, and *paedagogi* (Bradley 1994: 143; 1991b).³³ What is most striking about non-kin child care in Roman society is that slaves and freedmen played a role in the socialization of elite Roman children alongside their parents and other relatives: they were more than just physical carers.³⁴ Some *paedagogi* tended children along with wet nurses soon after birth: the poet Martial recounted that his *paedagogus* Charidemus rocked his cradle (Mart. 11.39.1–2). The very poor probably breastfed and cared for their children out of economic necessity (Bradley 1991a: 19; see also Parkin in this volume); otherwise, wet nursing was the preferred method of caring for infants among different social classes.³⁵ The use of non-kin caregivers, particularly wet nurses, was not a sign of parental indifference in Roman society: although there are many reasons upper class Romans might have chosen a wet nurse (pp. 26–9), in general it was a choice made by parents because they believed nurses would give their children the best care possible.³⁶ Upper-class children were nursed and cared for by slaves and freedwomen who were employed for substantial periods of time within the *domus*,³⁷ and it is clear that parents

³² On wet nursing, see Bradley 1986, 1991a, 1994; Joshel 1986; Dixon 1988: 129–35; 1992: 98–132; Schulze 1998; Crespo Ortiz de Zárate 2002, 2005, 2006; Rawson 2003: 120–33; Laes 2011: 69–77.

³³ *Educator* and *paedagogus* were terms often used interchangeably.

³⁴ See, for example, Manilius *Astr.* 5.456–59 who points out that the *paedagogus* was the master of his own under-age master.

³⁵ For the use of wet nurses throughout Italy and the provinces by different social groups including slaves, see Bradley 1991a; Laes 2011: 6; Pudsey in this volume. Cf. Plutarch *Cat. Mai.* 20.3; Pseudo-Plut. *de Lib. Ed.* 3; Aul. Gell. *NA* 12.1.

³⁶ See Bradley 1991a: 26–9 for the reasons that Romans may have wished to employ wet nurses. Soranus *Gyn.* 2.18 gives instructions on how to find the best nurse possible. Although the use of non-kin carers may have helped parents cope with the high incidence of premature death in ancient Rome (e.g., Valerius Maximus [2.6.16] seems to approve of the Persian tradition of parents taking an interest in their children largely after they had reached the age of seven), there is ample evidence that parents were affected by the deaths of young children.

³⁷ It is not always clear what happened to the child of a wet nurse: if the child survived, it may already have been weaned (but cf. Evans Grubbs in this volume). There is also evidence to suggest that a wet nurse could feed more than one child at time. See Bradley 1991a: 149–55; Rawson 2003: 122. *Conlactei* (fellow nurslings) were honored together on funerary memorials (e.g., *CIL* 6.6324, 14.2413).

expected that emotional attachments would be formed between nurse and child³⁸ and between child and *paedagogus*. *Nutrices* were responsible for the physical growth and development of a child. They were in charge of bathing, exercising, and feeding their charges day and night and, when the child was old enough, for helping the child learn to walk (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.30–1, 2.37; Garnsey 1991: 56–9).

Elite literature suggests that most parents deliberately tried to provide the most suitable carers, beginning with the *nutrix*, because a child's intellectual development could be adversely affected during his or her first three years of life (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.18).³⁹ It was important that children learn good speech patterns from listening to their carers, so nurses should be competent speakers of Greek. They should also be individuals of good disposition who would behave appropriately in front of their impressionable young charges (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.19; Quint. 1.1.4–5, 1.1.16–7). Nurses were expected to prevent children from developing bad habits: greedy children, for example, should be distracted with games and other entertainments (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.48).⁴⁰ It was also important that nurses look after the emotional well-being of children by providing security and comfort at times of stress and trauma. They sang lullabies, held and caressed children, wiped away their tears, and distracted them with toys when they were ill or frightened (Sor. *Gyn.* 2.38–40; Pseudo-Plut., *de Lib. Ed.* 3; Oribasius *LI* 20.28; Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 4.74).

Paedagogi also played a central role in the upbringing and socialization of children of various classes in Roman society. Although they were used most frequently by the upper classes, including the imperial family, evidence shows that they also cared for children of the lower and freed classes.⁴¹ The Greek and Roman concepts of the role of the *paedagogus* in the lives of children were very similar. Plautus is the earliest extant author to connect the two traditions (Plaut. *Bacch.* 422–48; Laes 2011: 119–20). *Paedagogi* helped to care for upper-class children within the *domus*, overseeing various aspects of child care (e.g., Charidemus in Mart. *Epig.* 11.39.1–2; illness: Lib. *Or.* 58.10; meals: Suet. Nero 36.2), and educational activities after school attendance (Lib. *Or.* 58.8–9). *Paedagogi* not only accompanied children to school but also ensured the safety of boys at the baths and the theater and attended them while they made other social visits when older (Mart. *Epig.* 11.39; Epictetus *Ench.* 3.19.5; Suet. *Aug.* 44.2; Val. Max. 3.1.2). They were also expected to protect boys from homosexual advances (Pet. *Sat.* 85; Juv. 10.303–5; Mart.

³⁸ Not all nurses would have bonded with their charges, and there is evidence of abusive relationships. However, the figure of the nurse also made a useful stereotype for moralists in Greek and Roman literature. See Bradley 1986: 214–5, 1994: 151; Laes 2011: 71.

³⁹ Quintilian 1.1.12–4 believed that children should be bilingual but that formal grammar should not be taught until the age of seven. In Plautus' *Mercator* 289–304, Demipho remembers back to the age of seven when he first learned his Latin alphabet.

⁴⁰ Play was considered a natural act for young infants that should be encouraged (Galen *de San. Tuen.* 1.10; Oribasius *LI* 24.16). For children's toys see Shumka 1989; Rawson 2003: 128–9; Lucretius 5.230 (rattles); Horace *Sat.* 2.3.171; Persius *Sat.* 3.18, 2.39; Tib. *El.* 1.5.3–4; and Verg. *Aen.* 7.378–83; see also Harlow in this volume.

⁴¹ Major studies on *paedagogi* include Bonner 1977: 34–64; Bradley 1991b; Schulze 1998; Zaccaria 2003; Laes 2009, 2011: 113–22.

Epig. 9.27.10–11). Like *nutrices*, *paedagogi* were expected to reinforce codes of behavior such as methods of walking and dining in public (Sen. *Ep.* 94.8–9; Plut. 439 E–F; Pseudo-Plut. *de Lib. Ed.* 7; Bradley 1991b: 52–3). Although the stereotypical *paedagogus* was unreliable and incompetent (Laes 2011: 116), there is ample evidence to suggest that many relationships were close and that strong bonds of affection developed between both adult and child: Appian preserves the story of a *paedagogus* shielding a boy with his own body during the turbulent times of the late Republic (4.30, 43 BCE). Another *paedagogus* from Nicomedia in Asia Minor was killed attempting to protect his two charges from the falling debris caused by an earthquake (*TAM* 4.1.134; Laes 2011: 120). Thirteen-year-old Minicia Marcella had *nutrices*, a *paedagogus*, and *praeceptores* involved in her upbringing (Plin. *Ep.* 5.16; on Minicia Marcella, see previous discussion).

For many children, contact with *nutrices*, *paedagogi*, and other carers continued into adulthood: the Emperor Augustus honored his *paedagogus* Sphaerus with a public funeral on his death, and Marcus Aurelius is reported to have been visibly moved by the death of his *educator* (Augustus: Cass. Dio 48.33.1; Marcus: SHA *Pius* 10.5). Such relationships were often recognized on funerary inscriptions by groups below the elite. For example, Sperata was the *nutrix* of L. Sentius Pietas, the freeborn son of a freedman and freeborn woman who died at the age of seventeen (*AE* 1914.276; *CIL* 11.7856). However, it was important that elite children reaching adulthood be socialized to recognize that their relationships with their carers must change, as suggested by Cicero in the *De Amicitia* (74):

In general, judgments about friendships should be made only when a man's character has been developed and his maturity of age confirmed. Nor should any men who in their early years were devoted to hunting and games have as their intimate acquaintances those whom they loved at the time because they were endowed with the same passion. For otherwise our nurses and pedagogues, by right of length of their acquaintance with us, will demand the largest share of our affections. Of course they must not be neglected, but they must be regarded in an entirely different way. Otherwise friendships are not able to remain secure. For different characters are accompanied by different needs, the diversity of which severs friendships. Nor is there any other reason why good men are not able to be friends with wicked men, and wicked men with good men, except that there is such a wide gulf between them in both character and expectation.

Thus it was imperative that upper-class Roman children entering adulthood recognize that the required relationship with *nutrices* and *paedagogi* must become one similar in nature to that shared between patron and client. Pliny the Younger, for example, gave his former *nutrix* a small farm as he might a favored freedman (*Ep.* 6.3.1). The two *nutrices* of the Emperor Nero, Egloge and Alexandria, fulfilled their duty to their former charge by depositing Nero's ashes after his funeral in the family tomb of the Domitii when he had been abandoned by his family and friends (Suet. *Nero* 50). The Emperor Domitian, whose body had been placed on a common *sandapila* (bier) by the *vespillones* (corpse

bearers) who were taking it to a pauper's burial site, was ensured a proper cremation and burial only after the intervention of his nurse Phyllis (Suet. *Dom.* 17.3). Upper-class Roman children, as they reached adulthood, would have been encouraged by their elders to recognize their social station and to modify their relationships accordingly.

It is clear that the early lives and socializing experiences of Roman children would have differed depending on their economic and social status. Many upper-class children, such as those of Marcus Tullius Cicero, or the children of wealthy freedmen, probably lived in larger-style houses in urban centers and in country villas. However, many freeborn and freed children would have lived in small rooms above or adjacent to businesses operated by their families or in small apartments. Their early care and socializing experiences may not have been provided by a *nutrix* or *paedagogus*, particularly after weaning. Instead, they may have been cared for by friends and neighbors, or they may have been fostered out so that their parents could work (Rawson 2003: 254). *Mammae* and *tatae* seem to have been carers for children of lower-class families (Bradley 1991c). For example, Tiberius Iulius, who lived for only three years, was commemorated by his parents Terminalis and Julia Euphrantice and his *tata* Anthus and *mamma* Rhoxane (*CIL* 6.35530). Other children may have accompanied their parents as they worked, perhaps playing nearby and being given simple tasks until they were old enough to take on specific duties (see Sigismund-Nielsen in this volume).

THE ROLE OF EXTENDED FAMILY IN THE SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

Many children in the Roman world, during both the republican and the imperial periods, must have experienced the death of one or both parents at an early age. Divorce, too, often meant that a child might be raised in the house of an extended family member. Elite literature is scattered with references confirming that extended family members took up responsibility for providing care in these situations. Pliny the Younger's wife, Calpurnia, was raised in the house of her paternal grandfather by her paternal aunt (Plin. *Ep.* 4.19), and Quintilian's sons benefited from the influences of both their father and grandmother, alongside the usual non-kin carers (Quint. 6. *pr.* 7–9). In the republican period Livia, the sister of M. Livius Drusus, on the death of her second husband M. Porcius Cato, moved her children from both marriages to the *domus* of her brother Drusus, where her mother also resided (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 1.1–2; Val. Max. 3.1.2). Livia had two children by her first marriage to Q. Servilius Caepio, which ended in divorce, and two children from her second marriage. All four children thus spent time being socialized by the behaviors and standards expected in the household of their maternal uncle (*avunculus*), who, according to Plutarch and Valerius Maximus, was particularly influential on the Younger Cato (Harders 2010: 63). Lower-class children may also have been raised by extended family members in such circumstances. Epitaphs, for example, attest

grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings as dedicators to young children who had died before reaching adulthood (Saller and Shaw 1984: 136; Thylander 1952 A223 [uncle]; *CIL* 6.5305 [brother]; *CIL* 6.6889 [grandmother]; Thylander 1952 A81 [grandfather]).

We know from his letters that Marcus Cornelius Fronto was involved in the lives of his daughter and grandchildren. In 164 CE, for example, he wrote to his son-in-law Aufidius Victorinus commenting on the behavior of his grandsons. In particular, he seemed delighted to report that some of his own qualities were already apparent in the younger child whose first solid food was grapes and whose favorite animals were birds, particularly chicks, pigeons, and sparrows. Fronto recounted that his own *educatores* and *magistri* had often told him that these were also his favorites when he was an *infans* (Fronto *Ep. ad Amicos* 1.12). According to Suetonius, the Emperor Augustus played a central socializing role in the lives of his grandchildren, ensuring that the girls learned the important skills of spinning and weaving and how to behave and speak appropriately in public. Augustus was equally involved in socialization of his grandsons, teaching them reading, writing, swimming, and how to behave appropriately when dining and traveling in public (Suet. *Aug.* 64).

PUBLIC LIFE AND THE ATTAINMENT OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Children were very much a part of public life in Rome and in their local towns and communities. They attended the baths, experienced life in and around fora and other public buildings, and were undoubtedly very aware of the effects of death and disease. Unfortunately, we do not have evidence recalling individual experiences of or reactions to public life. However, adult observations of certain activities occasionally give us a glimpse into how children began to shape their environment and how they began to understand the world around them in response to their physical surroundings. They built crude houses, harnessed mice to small carts, played odds and evens, and rode sticks (Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.247–9). Elite *pueri* imitated the actions of their fathers, uncles, and other adult males by pretending that they were magistrates wearing togas, carrying fasces, and passing judgments from tribunals (Sen. *Constant.* 12.21; see also Vuolanto in this volume). Children attended religious festivals and games, triumphs, and funerals where status and hierarchy were reinforced visually and where religious rituals were performed to appease the gods, purify the city, or reinforce the importance of being Roman (Rawson 1991:18; Mustakallio 2005). Some children were able to participate, perhaps singing at a funeral or state ceremony or walking in processions (Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 1–76; Suet. *Aug.* 100.2; Bettini 2005).

Children were often attendees at various forms of Roman entertainment, and even as they took their seats they would have observed how people interacted with one another and how they responded to various visual spectacles. Augustus rearranged seating at the

theater in such a way as to encourage young boys to think about status and fatherhood. Married men of the plebs were given special seats, senators the most prestigious position at the front of the theatre, and *praetextati* an area that was separate to that of their *paedagogi* (Suet. *Aug.* 44.2). For many children, it is clear that the events of the arena (and we can also assume games and triumphs) were topics of conversation, often dominating schoolroom discussions, undoubtedly often continuing debates that had started at the events themselves (Tac. *Dial.* 29.3–4). According to Herodian (3.10.3–4), Caracalla and Geta, the sons of Septimius Severus, often exhibited their enthusiasm for shows, dancing, and chariot driving, and usually took opposing sides when they watched quail fights and cockfights. Children in certain areas of the empire would have also developed an awareness of intertown rivalry as they attended the games. Tacitus recalled the disaster that befell the games in Pompeii held by Livineius Regulus when verbal insults between the Pompeians and Nuceria developed into a full-scale riot in which men, women, and children were killed (Tac. *Ann.* 14.17). Some Romans, conforming to the pressures of their status as adults, preferred to equate games, gladiators, and actors with the uneducated masses (Cic. *Off.* 2.55–8; *Mur.* 38–42; Plin. *Ep.* 9.6).

The Romans, over the course of eight hundred years, celebrated in excess of 360 triumphs, though there were extended periods of time, particularly in the imperial era, where there were relatively few (Nicolet 1980: 352; Beard 2007: 69–70). However, when they took place, the celebration of a triumph in Rome would have had a powerful effect on all children in the city, albeit in many different ways:

The Roman triumphal procession was a magnificent spectacle. Winding its way along the streets of the city, embracing the civic sphere by its very movement, the procession saw the victorious general and his army as they returned to the Capitol from the scene of war. Before his chariot, the *triumphator* paraded the fruits of victory: spoils, captives, and representations of peoples and places conquered. (Östenburg 2009: 1)

In the Republic, for the sons of the *triumphator*, the general receiving the highest honor of state for defeating a foreign enemy, the experience was probably one of pride and exhilaration. They not only witnessed their fathers distributing donatives to the people and to the soldiers (Zonar. 7.21) but also were honored by being allowed to ride with their father in the procession. *Praetextati* rode either in the triumphal chariot or on its trace horses.⁴² According to Cicero, a triumph was one of the most important socializing experiences a father could offer his sons (Cic. *Mur.* 11), an attitude that is also reiterated in Livy (45.40). Livy says that when L. Aemilius Paullus had been awarded a triumph after defeating King Perseus of Macedon, he had planned to include his sons aged fourteen and twelve. Tragically, death and illness prevented the boys from sharing their father's honor and from experiencing an event of such grandeur and ritual significance

⁴² According to both Appian (*Pun.* 66) and Cassius Dio preserved in Zonaras (7.21), relatives of the triumphant general also participated in the *pompa*.

that it would have encouraged them to become successful generals themselves: Livy writes that the shared experience with their father would have been so powerful that both boys would have begun to plan future triumphs of their own (Livy 45.40.7–9). In the late Republic, Gaius Marius and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus both shared their triumphs with their sons (Beard 2007: 19–20, 90–1), each general undoubtedly hoping that his son would follow in his own footsteps. In 46 BCE sixteen-year-old Octavian was given military honors during the celebrations associated with Caesar's African triumph, an unprecedented honor (Suet. *Aug.* 8.1).

Emperors continued to allow their sons to ride in the chariot or on the trace horses, though Augustus and Tiberius modified the tradition slightly by permitting children of the imperial family, not only their sons, to participate and become part of the history of Roman achievement. Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus, and Tiberius, his adopted son, rode in Augustus' Egyptian triumph of 29 BCE (Suet. *Tib.* 6.4). All the children of Germanicus, including his young daughters, accompanied their father in his triumph of 17 CE over the Germans (Tac. *Ann.* 2.41; McWilliam 2010). Commodus, aged five, and Marcus Annianus Verus, aged four, joined Marcus Aurelius in 166 CE in his Parthian triumph. Although Septimius Severus seems not to have celebrated a triumph (Cass. Dio 76.1; Herodian 3.10.1–2; SHA *Severus* 16.6–7), his sons were integrated into the imagery decorating triumphal arches in Rome and Lepcis Magna, where they were clearly designated as heirs and successors (Rome: Brilliant 1967; *CIL* 6.1033; Lepcis Magna: Bonnanno 150–62). The children of generals during the republican period and of the imperial family in the empire would have been aware, in many cases from an early age, of their future roles as military generals, role models, and Roman statesmen.

Many children of various ages and backgrounds would have been spectators watching the triumphal *pompa* with their parents, relatives, or carers: Josephus, for example, describes the crowds that thronged into the city, filling all available space to see the triumph of Titus and Vespasian in 71 CE (Joseph. *BJ* 7.122). Children would have marveled at sights such as captives in exotic, non-Roman dress and at the paraphernalia of foreign kings. Children perhaps also asked inquisitively about the placards and paintings of battles and foreign landscapes as they went past (e.g., the triumph of Pompey in 61 BCE, App. *Mith.* 116–7; Plut. *Pomp.* 45). They would have heard the songs and applause of the soldiers (Livy 39.7.3) and in the imperial period may have been given a coin featuring a bust of the triumphant emperor when their attention wavered. Many may also have accompanied their families to the associated sacrifices, spectacles, and games and were perhaps recipients of handouts (e.g., Caesar: Suet. *Iul.* 37.1–39.4; Cass. Dio 63.2–7, Nero's mock triumph).

It is possible, however, that some children independently of age or status may also have reacted negatively to the experience of a triumph, or at least parts of it. In the triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus in 167 BCE we know that the presence of King Perseus' three children, two sons and a daughter, turned the attention of some of the crowd away from the *triumphator* and toward the innocent "barbarian" children. People took pity on the children who were too young to comprehend either their fate or what was happening around them (Plut. *Aem.* 33.4; see also Beard 2007: 136–9). At times child spectators

at a triumphal parade may have turned their eyes away in fright or horror or have even been reduced to tears. However, most would have been socialized to understand that they were witnessing the celebration of a very special achievement that was indicative of Roman military prowess and that they should be proud to witness such an event.

Thus, children were not shielded from the realities of life in the ancient world. They were very much active participants, and children from all classes of society would have been aware of Rome's military superiority as they traveled through the city, even when a triumph was not taking place. In the imperial period they would have observed elite boys (the *Iuvenes*) undertaking military-style training in places such as the Campus Martius. Augustus reorganized the *tirocinium* so that boys who had taken the *toga virilis* were given the opportunity to learn how to use blunt weapons, horse ride, and hunt (Cass. Dio 52.26). They demonstrated their skills at public ceremonies and games and played an important role in state religion. Children would also have observed younger boys (*praetextati*) undertaking training that was also military in nature so that they could participate in the *lusus Troiae* that was performed at events such as the Circensian games (Cass. Dio 53.1.4, 55.10.6). The training and the performances were dangerous, and at times parents voiced their objections. However, they became an accepted platform for the promotion of imperial children, who were usually appointed as leaders of the games, at least down to the reign of Septimius Severus (Rawson 2003: 68, 320–2).

CONCLUSION

Children thus became adults in Roman society by interacting with a variety of people of varying ages and backgrounds and by experiencing many different social and cultural processes, both within the *domus* and in the wider community. In doing so, Roman children who grew up in the city of Rome during the late republican and early imperial periods learnt social and cultural norms and practices both consciously and unconsciously. Although we have difficulty in accessing individual ancient childhood experiences, it is clear that socialization began from birth for the majority of children. Importantly, we learn from modern sociological studies and later ancient evidence (see the chapter by Vuolanto in this volume) that children themselves were active agents who contributed to their own social and cultural development. Parents saw it as their duty to provide for their children physically and emotionally through the socialization process by developing support networks. Adults in this network would care for a child and provide emotional support or play important roles in shaping the behavior, morals, and social and cultural values that were expected in adulthood. Roman parents who employed *nutrices* or *paedagogi* were not indifferent to their children. They spent time with their offspring and ensured that they were exposed to events where they would observe and absorb particular customs and values. Children were not excluded from religious ceremonies or other public celebrations, and they experienced the physicality of towns and cities. In walking across fora and among temples and monumental arches, they would have

observed a certain style of form and decoration, even if they did not fully understand its significance until they reached adulthood. As they traveled to and from their homes or visited the baths or friends and acquaintances, they would have experienced life in a crowded noisy city. They would have been affected by the deaths of adults and other children, attended their funerals, and visited their burial sites in graveyards housing remains of the dead. Perhaps, like adults, they were afraid at different times that they would die prematurely and, if they were boys, feared that they might not wear the adult toga, serve in the army, or inherit their father's property (Sen. *Marc.* 9.2). However, the majority of children would have been encouraged to believe that they would become adults who were proud of being Roman, who would continue the family line, and who would themselves become role models for future generations of Roman citizens.

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CHAPTER 14

SLAVE AND LOWER-CLASS ROMAN CHILDREN

HANNE SIGISMUND-NIELSEN

INTRODUCTION: A LITTLE GIRL CALLED PASSIA

In March 139 CE in the mining area of Alburnus Maior in Thrace a certain Maximus, son of Bato, bought a girl of about six years of age (*CIL* III, pp. 936–9: *Cautio de puella emptā*). The seller of the girl was a Dasius, son of Verzo. We know this because the fragmented tablet containing the contract of her sale has survived. It is twice mentioned in the document that the girl was *empta sportellaria*. This has led some scholars to assume that she was a foundling (Meyer 2004: 56–7; Cristaldi 2007: 220–2).¹ She may very well have been, but the term *sportellaria* cannot prove anything, as this is the only time we meet this noun. At the time of her sale the girl was called Passia, but it is mentioned that she could be called by any other name. It is also stated that she was healthy and of good behavior and that if she was not she could be returned to the seller. When we have recovered from the shock that a little girl could be sold in this way and that she does not even have a permanent name, we must remember that the language used in the contract is strictly formulaic (*Dig.* 21.1.1.1, Ulpian). Thus, it is not because Maximus and Dasius wanted to humiliate the girl more than she already had been; they simply

¹ The word *sportellaria* is an adjective of the noun *sportella*, meaning small basket. Thus, the translation of *empta sportellaria* would be “basket bought.” The discussion of the meaning of the word *sportellaria* is based on the meaning of the word *sportula*. A *sportula* was used as a container for gifts frequently of food either public or private (Suet. *Claud.* 21, *Nero* 16, *Dom.* 7; *Juv. Sat.* 1.95 sq.). But there was another use for baskets. Infants could be abandoned in them, although the word *sportula* is never used in that connection. Plautus’ comedy *Cistellaria* can be translated as “The Basket Girl.” See *Cist.* 4.1 for a description of a basket used to expose the girl.

treated her as the piece of property she was in their eyes. That, of course, in our eyes is bad enough, but that was her condition of life as a slave. If Passia was lucky she would not be treated too badly in the household of Maximus. She would work hard but be fed and clothed. Perhaps she would survive to adulthood and enter into a *contubernium* (common law marriage) with a male slave from the household and start a family, giving birth to little *vernae* (slaves born in the master's household) who would grow up and add to the property of her owners (Rawson 1974; Treggiari 1981; Sigismund-Nielsen 1991; Rawson 2010). If she was not fortunate she might be worked to death, and that would be the end of her. Some owners certainly did treat their slaves cruelly (see, e.g., Pliny the Elder *NH* 9.39.77; Bradley 2011; Joshel 2011). Her conditions in life depended entirely on her owner's whims.

I mentioned already that Passia perhaps was a foundling. Unfortunately, that cannot be proven. As already noted, the word *sportellaria* appears only here so its meaning is uncertain. Passia could, however, have been born free, exposed, taken up, and raised as a slave. There has been a lively debate over the frequency of infant exposure in the ancient world (Corbier 2001; see also Evans Grubbs in this volume). That question can never be solved. What can be stated with confidence is that it happened and is referred to quite matter of factly in the sources. Already this and the contract of sale of Passia tell us how fundamentally different the Roman view of children was from ours. Interestingly, there has been a lot of scholarly attention given to the contract of sale of Passia and other children like her. Surprising, to me, is that very few of these discussions seem to be concerned with how the children were treated. Most scholars are interested only in the legal and linguistic aspects of these contracts of sale (e.g., Camodeca 2006).²

ABANDONED CHILDREN

A few more clues about the lives of such children as Passia can be drawn from a most unexpected place, the pen of the sensationalist Roman biographer Suetonius. In addition to his lives of the Roman emperors, Suetonius wrote a work about rhetors and grammarians. It is of assistance because it follows the lives and careers of men who were usually born at the lower levels of society but who nevertheless were able to pursue a career and to climb socially as well as economically. Marcus Antonius Gniphio, for example, was a freeborn exposed boy from Gaul who had been raised, educated, and eventually manumitted by his *nutritor* (Suet. *Gram. et Rhet.* 7.1). Gaius Melissus was another freeborn child who had been exposed as a baby, *ob discordiam parentum* (because of disagreement between his parents), and who, like Gniphio, benefited from the care and devotion of the man who raised him (Suet. *Gram. et Rhet.* 21.1). After he had been given

² A noteworthy exception is Keith Bradley. See, for example, Bradley 1994: 2, where he discusses the sale of another little girl.

as a gift to Maecenas his mother tried to reclaim him, without luck. Not surprisingly he much preferred to remain a well-treated slave of the wealthy Maecenas (Evans Grubbs 2010: 298). He was soon freed and put in charge of the libraries in the *Porticus Octaviae*. This is a telling detail. Status was not all. Melissus had received much more respect and found more possibilities to advance in society as a slave than he would have in his birth family, had they not abandoned him. We do not know why the mother of Melissus tried to reclaim him, but it may very well have been for economic reasons. Her husband may have died and so may other children born to her. Now it would be convenient to have the son back that she had given up so many years before. A child owed its parents *pietas*, but there were limits (*Dig.* 37.15.1.2, Ulpian). The parents should always behave in a decent manner. If not there would be repercussions (*Dig.* 37.12.5, Papinian).

We can gain a clearer sense of the subsequent lives of abandoned children such as Gaius Melissus and the shadowy women like his mother from a curious entry in the *Digest*. Here (22.6.1.2, Paulus) there is an example of the legal implications for a free, abandoned person depending on whether or not he knows who his parents are. If a person who is *bona fide serviens* (serving as a slave in good faith) does not know that he is freeborn and who his parents are, he cannot know that he is an heir to them and will therefore have the right to enter upon inheritance to them. This is the case even if his right to do so legally has expired. There is also an interesting example at *Dig.* 40.4.29 (Scaevola) that perhaps is similar to the situation of Gaius Melissus and his mother (see Evans Grubbs 2010: 294–7; also Evans Grubbs in this volume). A man repudiated his pregnant wife and remarried. The repudiated wife gave birth to a son that she abandoned. The child, however, was taken up and raised by another. The intriguing detail here is that the son carried his father's name (*hic sublatuſ ab alio educatuſ eſt nomine patris vocitatuſ*). So this boy was raised as a freeborn Roman with his original *tria nomina*. It is then claimed that neither his father nor his mother knew whether he was dead or alive. Nevertheless, after his father's death he was recognized as his father's son by his mother and paternal grandmother and instituted as heir to his father's property. There is something fishy to this story—but only where the truthfulness of the family members is concerned. The case in itself seems to fit with what we know of Roman daily life. There are no virgin priestesses kidnapped and raped by pirates as we find in the declamatory exercises of Seneca the Elder and Pseudo-Quintilian or in the plays of Terence. Here we witness, I believe, a mother who had successfully worked to have her son acknowledged as heir of his father and probably also to get back at her husband who had repudiated her when pregnant. This example does not illustrate the condition of lower-class children such as the poor Passia with whom I began, but it does show that infant abandonment was indeed a very complex affair. And so too it may well have been for Passia.

The picture that I am attempting to sketch of the lives of the very young and very poor can be more complicated still. In addition to these last two examples, there are quite a high number more of *bona fide servi* in the *Digest*—that is, slaves born free, but neither their assumed owner nor they are aware of it (Crook 1967: 58–60). Both parties subsequently learn the surprising fact. Then legal questions must be addressed. At least

some of these slaves must have started their lives as abandoned freeborn infants (*Dig.* 22.6.1.2, Paulus). It is claimed by many scholars that *alumni* frequently were exposed and rescued children (Treggiari 1969: 2; Osiek and Balch 1997: 50; Good 2006: 30; Edmondson 2011: 358). There is, however, no indication in any of our epigraphic, literary, or legal sources that this normally would have been the case.³ *Alumni* were children who were brought up by others than their parents. The root of the word is *alere* (to nourish). Thus, an *alumnus* is frequently seen as a quasi-adopted child (Sigismund-Nielsen 1987; Bellemore and Rawson 1990; Rawson 2003: 251–3). But according to the epigraphic material an *alumnus* could also be seen as an apprentice (*CIL* VI 10158, 8454, 8679). Being an apprentice in Rome did not preclude the possibility that the child had started its life as a quasi-adopted child in the household. Therefore, the type of relationship covered by the term *alumnus* is very complex, and there is really no way of knowing if there is any more precise definition of the term than a child brought up by someone else than its parents. It is, however, safe to say that *alumni* were not usually foundlings because we would have expected at least one reference that would indicate this was the case. Such a reference does not, to my knowledge, exist.

POOR FREEBORN CHILDREN

And what were the lives of these poor but freeborn children like? Antonius Gniphio and Gaius Melissus, both freeborn, were surely exceptions in deserving attention. We meet freeborn children from the lower classes very infrequently in our sources. They were simply not interesting enough. A glimpse, however, can be had of children's work in Varro's handbook on farming (*RR* 1.17), where he states that poor free farmers till the land themselves with the help of their *progenies* (...*aut cum ipsi colunt, plerique pauperculi cum sua progenie*). *Progenies* can mean family or relatives but most frequently offspring. We can assume from passages such as this one that *cum sua progenie* must have included these poor, freeborn children to whom I have been referring. We can only imagine their lives. Conditions for small farmers were not enviable. Cicero says as much in his speech *de lege agraria*, against Rullus' agrarian law. The land is described as droughty or pestilential (*in Sipontina siccitate aut in Salpinorum plenis pestilentiae finibus*)—not at all a pleasant place when compared with the life the plebs led in Rome (*Agr.* 2.27.71). It takes hardy people to survive there (*Agr.* 2.31.84). We know that poor people constituted the majority of the population, but in literature we hear about them only as mobs that had to be quieted with *panem et circenses* (*Juv. Sat.* 10.78–81). Therefore, we

³ In Plautus' comedy *Cistellaria*, the girl Selenium is in line 762 referred to as an *alumna*. She was indeed originally abandoned by her parents, but it does not seem that the term *alumna* refers to that fact here. Rather, the term here seems to refer to Selenium's relationship with her fosterer. This is in line with how the term normally is used.

will have to focus on the lives of slave children here. They were of importance because they were seen as property. A few young slaves are mentioned in the letters of Cicero.⁴ However, the only genuinely useful literary sources that describe the lives of lower-class people, or rather slaves, are the handbooks on farming by Varro and Columella.

SLAVE CHILDREN

Let us hear, then, what Columella can tell us of the lives of these slave children. Columella specifies the qualities a good *vilicus* (a farm's slave bailiff) should have. It was important that he had been hardened by farm work from when he was little (1.8.2: *rusticis operibus ab infante duratus*). This means that he would have been expected to work at least since before his seventh year (*Dig.* 26.7.1.2, Ulpian) or probably earlier (*Dig.* 7.7.6.1, Ulpian). This is important. There is no doubt that slave children were put to work as early as possible. Therefore, when Maximus Batonis bought the little girl Passia, he did not plan to feed her for years until she could start working. She was put to work immediately. In the *Digest* we can read that if the use of an infant slave has been bequeathed us we should not despair, for the moment the child is not an infant any longer it can start being of use (*Dig.* 7.1.55, Pomponius). Infancy for children is defined as the inability to understand one's role and the expectations that one's family or master have of one. The moment a child gains this ability it is no longer an *infans*. And so they were set to work.

Columella informs us about the kind of work the future *vilicus* could have done on the farm as a child. The child could help the slave in charge of the fowls to run after those that had escaped (*RR* 8.2.7). This job would also be suitable for a sedulous old woman (*anus sedula*). The level of human exploitation on the farm is impressive. Slaves were put to work the moment they understood what they were supposed to do and not let off until they died—they worked from childhood until they were old. Children could also be put to pruning and weeding. Columella mentions that this was so simple a task that even a child could do it (*RR* 4.27.6). Both boys and girls could also be employed as shepherds, Varro informs us (*RR* 2.10.1). These children, just like Daphnis and Chloe in Longus' novel, must have been quite young. Young men would be responsible for the bigger cattle that grazed on the pastures away from the farm, while boys and girls would look after the smaller ones that were taken in every night.

We know that at least some very young children did work very hard. That is evident from analyzing their skeletons. Some of the skeletons from Herculaneum examined by the American physical anthropologist and archeologist Sara Bisel were of children. One

⁴ In *Ep. ad Att.* 1.12.4, Cicero writes about the death of his slave Sositheus, his reader (*anagnostes*). He mentions that he grieves over Sositheus' death more than he ought to over the death of a slave. Alexis is mentioned in three letters to Atticus (5.20, 7.4, 16.15). Alexis was the secretary of Atticus and seems to have enjoyed the same closeness to his master as Tiro had with Cicero.

was that of a girl approximately seven years old, the same age as Passia, who not only showed signs of malnourishment as a baby but, despite her very young age, also had been accustomed to work very hard. Another skeleton was that of a girl of around fourteen years who had been carrying a little child (who was wearing small pieces of jewelry) when she and her charge died. According to Sara Bisel (2002: 464), her skeletal remains showed that she “did a lot of running up and down stairs or hills.” Also, her teeth reveal malnutrition. These two girls clearly belonged to the lower classes and were perhaps both slaves. The difference between them and the skeletons of wealthier people found together with them is striking.

SLAVE BREEDING

Let us go back to Varro and Columella and see what else they can tell us about small children. The *vilicus* would be assigned a woman to live with (Columella, *RR* 1.8.5). She was the *vilica*, the overseer of work in the household. It is important to notice that Columella uses the verb *adsignanda est* (should be assigned) of the *vilica*. The *vilicus* and the *vilica* had no choice in the matter.⁵ That is not surprising considering the prevalence of arranged marriages also among the free population (Dixon 1992: 61–97). Columella then goes on to describe how the ideal *vilica* should be. Among many other things she must be *non nimium puella*; that is, she should be young but not too young. It could not be recommended that a twelve-year-old girl run a farm. She would have no respect among the other slaves on the farm. But, even so, our *vilica* is not too far from childhood.

We can learn still more about the lives and conditions of the very young by considering the attitude of the Romans to slave breeding—it was, perhaps unsurprisingly, a very ambivalent one. On one hand, Ulpian (*Dig.* 5.3.27 pr) claims that *ancillae* were not purchased commonly for the purpose of breeding (*quia non temere ancillae eius rei causa comparantur ut pariant*).⁶ On the other hand, several paragraphs in the *Digest* are concerned with the ownership of *partus ancillarum*, the legal term for the offspring of such slave women. There is also another paragraph (*Dig.* 19.1.21 pr) mentioning that the sale of a slave woman who was sterile or over fifty years of age could be rescinded if she had been sold with her offspring added. Varro directly mentions slave breeding as a means

⁵ See also *Dig.* 40.4.59 pr (Scaevola), where the *pedisequae* (female attendants) of a woman were to be manumitted after the death of their mistress. The question is whether Eutychia, a former *pedisequa*, who is found to have been “married off” (*in contubernio tradita*) to an overseer would be manumitted. She would. See also Cato *RR* 143 addressed to the *vilicus*: “Take care that the *vilica* do her work. If your master has given her to you as wife (*uxorem*), you must be content with her.”

⁶ For the meaning of *non temere* see Harris 1999: 66, n. 31. For *partus ancillae* see also *Dig.* 22.1.28.1 (Gaius): *absurdum enim videbatur hominem in fructu esse, cum omnes fructus rerum natura hominum gratia comparaverit* (for it seemed absurd to consider a human being a fruit because nature provided the fruits of all things for the benefit of human beings).

for getting good shepherds (Varro *RR* 2.10.6: *quod ad feturam humanam pertinet pastorum*...). Columella also mentions that his female slaves could be rewarded with some freedom from work or could even obtain their freedom if they had produced more than three children (*RR* 1.8.19: *nam cui tres erant filii, vacatio, cui plures, libertas quoque contingebat*). The picture of breeding from slaves is also filled out by at least two paragraphs in the *Digest* that mention examples of slave women who were manumitted as a reward for having given birth to children. In one example, it was ordered in a will that the slave Arescusa be manumitted after giving birth to three children (*Dig.* 1.5.15, Ulpian; cf. *Dig.* 34.5.10.1, Ulpian). We do not hear about the treatment of these children in the household, nor do we hear about where these slave children would live. That was entirely up to their owner. They could be taken away from their mothers soon after birth and be sent somewhere else to be brought up. If the child was born in the owner's house in the city, it could be sent to his villa in the countryside to be reared (*Dig.* 32.99.3, Paulus; 50.16.210, Marcian). They or their mothers, if the mothers had not been granted freedom, could of course also be sold off or bequeathed while the children were still young (*Dig.* 43.33.1 pr, Julian; 36.2.25.1, Papinian). None of the cases in the *Digest* that speak about *partus ancillae* mention the fathers of these children. So we have no idea under what conditions their mothers had conceived. It does not seem that their owners cared.

Interestingly, Varro also mentions another type of slave children born in the household (*RR* 1.17.5). He says that overseers, as a reward, could be allowed to have partners, fellow slaves (*conservae*), from whom they would have children. The children of an overseer and his *conserva* technically had the same status as *partus ancillarum*; they would also be the *vernae* of their owner. But these children would probably not have been sold off arbitrarily. That would ill fit with the idea that raising a family was a reward to the overseer. This shows that, according to Varro, slaves could be born in the household for two very different reasons: for the breeding of new slaves, or as a reward for high-status slaves in the household.

The *Digest* offers many examples of situations where it was natural to keep slave families, consisting of parents and their young children, together, sometimes for generations. In *Dig.* 50.16.220.1 (Callistratus) we see an example where a farm with its bailiff, his wife (*contubernalis*), and their children has been bequeathed. The question is whether the grandchildren of the *vilicus* also have been bequeathed. They would have been, unless the intention of the testator was otherwise. In another example, the question is whether a woman who has bequeathed her Cornelian farm with all the slaves who lived and worked there to Titius also has bequeathed some slaves from this estate who were accompanying her on a trip to Rome. The decision was that these slaves did indeed belong to the estate and thus had been bequeathed along with it. Their belonging to the Cornelian estate is emphasized by the fact that they had left their wives and children, and some their mothers and fathers, behind on the estate.⁷

⁷ *Dig.* 33.7.27.1 (Scaevola): *relictis conservabus et filiis suis et quaedam [mancipia] matribus et patribus.*

Contubernia, the common law marriages of slaves, naturally had no legal protection. This is very clearly stated in *Dig.* 33.7.20.4 (Scaevola), where we learn that the wife and daughter of an *actor* who had been bequeathed did not follow him—so that was the end of that little family. This is not surprising, and we see it frequently mentioned in scholarly literature as part of the curse of being a slave in ancient Rome (Mouritsen 2011: 177). Therefore, it does at first glance seem astonishing that so many slave families in the *Digest* are kept together. In one passage (*Dig.* 33.7.12.7) it is even indicated that it would be unbelievable if an owner imposed cruel separation (*duram separationem*) of family members. Another passage (*Dig.* 33.7.12.33, Ulpian) states that “it is the case that slave families as well, wives and children that is, are kept on an inherited farm” (*contubernales quoque servorum, id est uxores, et natos, instructo fundo contineri verum est*). That is, the families of male slaves who belonged to an inherited property also truly belonged to that property. Elsewhere (*Dig.* 32.41.5, Scaevola), it is asked whether the grandchildren of a *vilicus* should be included in a property that a *concubina* had inherited. The answer is that they should (cf. again *Dig.* 50.16.220.1, Callistratus). Ulpian claims that very often when the sale of sick slaves was annulled their healthy relatives were also returned to the seller. It would be “an offence against *pietas*”⁸ not to do so (*Dig.* 21.1.35).

VERNAE

The next category of children that I would like to look at is the *vernae*. As mentioned earlier, children born to established slave families in the household would technically be termed *vernae*, slaves born in the household of their master. But it is not under this term that we meet them in the *Digest*. We know them only as the *fili* of a male, high-status slave and his *contubernalis*. *Vernae* appear only a handful of times in the *Digest* and never in significant roles in the household. They are used as legal examples of categories of slaves that could be included in a household or inheritance. You could, for example, bequeath all the *vernae* of a household to one person and all the weavers to another, but what then if a *verna* were also a weaver (*Dig.* 30.36 pr, Pomponius)? According to Adolf Berger (1953: 761), *vernae* were generally treated better than other slaves in the household. That is undoubtedly correct, but the *Digest* does not inform us of this. To see how *vernae* were treated, we will have to go to the tombstones their owners erected for them after their death.

To gain some confirmation of Berger’s (1953) claim, let us first look at some epitaphs put up for *vernae*. I will not present a quantitative analysis of these epitaphs but rather will give some representative examples of how they were commemorated (Sigismund-Nielsen 1997, 2007). Child *vernae* are treated quite differently in different areas of the Roman Empire. It does not seem that *verna* and the other terms of

⁸ That is, an offense against the duty owed to blood relations (*ad pietatis rationem offensam*).

relationship used of children always correspond to the clear-cut definitions to be found in dictionaries. In many epitaphs from different parts of the Italian peninsula, *alumnus* and *delicatus*, for example, cover much the same kind of relationship as does *verna* (Sigismund-Nielsen 1991; Rawson 2010; La Monaca and Sigismund-Nielsen forthcoming).

Young *vernae* are frequently commemorated affectionately as “dear small children,” and this gives us some sense of their status. In Ostia, Junia Eutychia commemorates Aphrodite her sweetest (*dulcissima*) *verna* who was one year and eleven months when she died (*CIL* XIV 592). This is a straightforward inscription with no interpretational problems. Aphrodite was a very sweet slave who was commemorated by her owner. But the inscription does not tell us anything about the household of Junia Eutychia and Aphrodite. Where was the mother of Aphrodite? Was Aphrodite a *partus ancillae*? Had her mother been sold off? We cannot know. We are informed only that Aphrodite was seen as a sweet little girl whom it was worthwhile to commemorate. More intriguing is another epitaph from Ostia. The freedwoman Caesia Tryphaena memorializes her *verna* Titus Caesius (*CIL* XIV 734). He was very sweet (*dulcissimus*) and five years and nine months old when he died. The grave plot where he is buried was quite big, 15 Roman feet wide and 30 Roman feet deep. Tryphaena also includes herself and her freedmen and freedwomen in the commemoration. This means that Titus Caesius was buried in the household tomb of his owner. Although he was slave born, he was obviously free at the time of his death, as we can tell from the fact that he carries the family name (*nomen*) of his former owner. This is common for commemorated *vernae* and offers further evidence of their favored position in the household. Titus Caesius is commemorated in a household context, but there is still no information regarding his personal relationships. All we know is that he had a loving relationship with his owner. In both of these epitaphs it is difficult to distinguish, from the Latin, between the commemoration of a son or a daughter and that of a *verna*. We normally expect household tombs to commemorate the family of the commemorator. They frequently do, but many such tombs also represent a quasi-family that is not necessarily buried together with the biological or spousal family. A good example is the household tomb of the freedman Gaius Caetronius Telesphorus (*CIL* XIV 736). In this inscription he commemorates himself, his *patronus* Gaius Caetronius Caecilianus, Caecilia Moschis the well-deserving (*bene merens*) wife of his *patronus*, his fellow freedwoman (*colliberta*) Caetronia Gorgenis, his *verna* Caetronia Telesphoris, and his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. It is tempting to see the *colliberta* as the spouse of the commemorator and the *verna* as their daughter, but we cannot tell. One inscription from Rome clearly says that a little *verna* was indeed brought up as a substitute for a son (*loco filii*, *CIL* VI 18754). The term *loco filii/ae* appears, to my knowledge, in fewer than a handful of cases in the Roman epigraphic material, but one can imagine that many more *vernae*, *alumni*, and *delicati* would fill the role of “own children” in a household.

The evidence relating to the quality of the lives of the young *vernae* in Rome can be confusing. Most lower-class Romans were buried in subterranean *columbaria* where possible relationships, except the one between the commemorated and the

commemorator, remain unknown.⁹ *Columbaria* in Rome either could be privately owned or could belong to an aristocratic family or the imperial household. They were large subterranean burial chambers where funerary urns were put up in little niches. Underneath the niches there were small, inscribed plaques. Only in a very few instances do we see relatives buried next to each other. Usually the burial site was determined according to where there were free niches. Therefore, an epitaph like the one that Lucius Calpurnius Antigonos put up to his sweetest four-year-old *verna* Faustinus is typical of the commemorative pattern in the city of Rome (*CIL* VI 17742). We are told only of the relationship between Faustinus and his master. We know nothing about their household or even where the epitaph originally was located. According to the editors of *CIL* VI, Faustinus' epitaph is now put up in the chiostro of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, so it may originally have been erected in one of the *columbaria* that appeared during the construction of the basilica.

Occasionally we also find one or both the parents of the *verna* as commemorators of the epitaph. I have chosen three inscriptions to illustrate this. Lucius Julius Thamyrus commemorates his well-deserving (*bene merens*), almost four-year-old *verna* Lucius Julius Carus, and so does his mother Julia Trophime (*CIL* VI 20304). The order of the commemorators is important. The *patronus* of Carus and Trophime had a higher status than the *verna* and his mother and is therefore mentioned first. The same phenomenon can be seen in *CIL* VI 26900, where Caecilia Cnide commemorates her *verna* Successus together with his mother Tryfosa, and in *CIL* VI 29067, where the three-year-old *verna* Vitalis is commemorated by his or her owner Flavia Chrysopolis and his or her parents Hermia and Secunda. Lucius Julius Thamyrus, Caecilia Cnide, and Flavia Chrysopolis did not belong to the upper classes. Their names reveal that much. There can be no deciding how big the households they represented were, but they must have been large enough to contain some slaves and freedmen and their offspring. But otherwise these epitaphs are too brief to say much about the role the *vernae* had in the households of their masters.

Let us therefore look at an epitaph from a household tomb that includes the commemoration of *vernae*. As opposed to *columbaria*, household tombs were monuments or plots constructed to contain the burials of an entire household. A household tomb gives more of an idea about the role these *vernae* might have in the household of their owners and as a result provides a further sense of the quality of the lives of the young *vernae*. In *CIL* VI 18404 Titus Flavius Daphnus commemorates his freed *verna* the twelve-year-old Flavia Prima, himself, his wife Flavia Eufrosyne, his relative (*cognatus*) Lucius Laberius Hermes, his excellent female friend (*optima amica*) Cassia Synethe, and his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. It was usual to commission a household monument while all the persons mentioned in the monument's inscription were alive and well. Sometimes, however, it happened that the death of a member

⁹ If they were commemorated at all. See Lanciani 1888: 665 for an unforgettable description of the pits outside the *Porta Esquilina* in Rome where refuse of all types, including human corpses, was thrown.

of the household occasioned the building of the monument. That seems to be the case here. The *verna* Flavia Prima is the only one mentioned with an age at death and is also the first person mentioned on the inscription. This may indicate her importance in the household. It does not seem that Eufrosyne and Daphnus had any children. Perhaps Prima functioned as daughter in the household. It should also be noticed that the other persons mentioned in the inscription were a *cognatus* and an *amica*, another example of quasi-kin in the context of a household commemoration. All these persons did not necessarily live in the same house.

WORKING CHILDREN

The *vernae* met so far in the inscriptions seem to have been treated more like the owner's own children than household slaves despite their technically belonging to the slave *familia*. Their lives seem to have little in common with that of Passia or the girls from Herculaneum. There do survive, however, examples of very young slave children who were commemorated on their tombstones with a job indication, and these are not always as sanguine in their details. Libanus was sixteen years old when he died. He was an imperial *verna* and had worked as a secretary (*ab epistulis*) until his death (*CIL* VI 8597).¹⁰ Halotus also belonged to the imperial household. He was being trained in the *paedagogium* and was twelve years old when he died. He was memorialized together with Phlegon, also from the *paedagogium*, who was eighteen years old at death (*CIL* VI 8965). *Paedagogia* were schools for the training of slave boys. Pliny the younger mentions in one of his letters the *paedagogium* of one of his villas (*Ep.* 7.27.13). The most famous *paedagogium*, however, was that of the imperial household. Its existence goes back to the reign of Tiberius where it was situated on the Palatine (Mohler 1940: 271). Numerous graffiti have been found there illustrating the life of the boys (Solin and Itkonen-Kaila 1966). These boys and young men (*pueri*) were highly accomplished and would as adults work in the imperial administration. They were also good-looking and well groomed and served in the dining room. This does not necessarily imply that these boys were sexually exploited, although this is sometimes assumed (*Sen. Ep.* 95.24).¹¹

Pacorus worked as a cobbler (*sutor*) and was commemorated by his sister Thallusa when he died at the age of twelve (*CIL* VI 10546). There is no mention of the parents of these last two children. Probably they were each other's only family. Some sense of their lives can be drawn from the *Digest* where two paragraphs provide a picture of how the life of the apprenticeship cobbler might have been (*Dig.* 19.2.13.4, 9.2.5.3, Ulpian).

¹⁰ By the time of Hadrian the office of *ab epistulis* had become one of the most important in the central administration. Libanus must have belonged to an earlier date. He was probably being trained as a secretary in the imperial household (Weaver 1972: 259).

¹¹ Beryl Rawson 2003: 189–90 has a balanced comment on these assumptions.

In these paragraphs we learn that a cobbler had beaten a boy so badly that he lost his eye. There was disagreement between the jurists as to whether the father of the boy was entitled to compensation for his son's lost eye. One was of the opinion that he was not liable as the punishment of the boy had not been to harm him but to teach him. One wonders whether the now one-eyed boy would be a better cobbler after experiencing this pedagogical treatment.

Children were quite frequently employed in the entertainment industry or as beauticians. Calocaerus was the *verna* of Daphnus who commemorated him when he died at age fifteen (CIL VI 9649). Calocaerus is described as an *ingeniossimus musicarius*, a very gifted musician or perhaps instrument builder. Both Sperata and Pieris were *ornatrices*, hairdressers (CIL VI 9728, 9731). Sperata was thirteen years old when she died and seems to have worked in a household where slaves were specialized in hairdressing.¹² Pieris was eight years old when she died and was commemorated by her mother Hilara.¹³

DELICIA

There can be no doubt that slave children who were intelligent or good-looking had the best chances of improving their social and economic status and thus of escaping the sort of life that may have befallen the unfortunate Passia. A small good-looking child could become the *delicium* of its owner (Sigismund-Nielsen 1990). The word *delicium* can be used as a term of relationship about a young child, frequently of slave status. It is primarily found in the epigraphic material and indicates, when used about one's own *delicium*, a relationship of quasi-familial character. In CIL VI 14990, for example, the imperial freedman Tiberius Claudius Dalus commemorates his freed slave Moschus who was his *delicium* and *verna* and died at the age of nine. If the *delicium* was commemorated with the name in genitive of the person(s) whose *delicium* the child had been, this child may have been one of those naughty slave children who, we are informed, were kept by

¹² Two *ornatrices* seem to be mentioned: Q Lollius Eros / Caetennius Flor / Sponde Caetennia sibi / Bremonti v a VIII Lalo f / Erotis orn v a XIX m VI / Speratae orn v ann XIII. D'Ambra 2007: 340, n. 8; Treggiari 1975: 67, n. 58; Laes 2011: 189, n. 128 also referred to this inscription. I agree with the reading of D'Ambra and Treggiari that Sperata was thirteen years old when she died. According to the reading of Laes, Sperata's age is unknown. The inscription is not straightforward, although it does seem clear that a thirteen-year-old *ornatrix* and also nineteen-year-old Lalus, perhaps the son of another *ornatrix* called Erotis, are being commemorated.

¹³ See also CIL VI 10142, commemorating an eleven-year-old male dancer: Caio Asinio Olympo saltatori vixit annos XI dies XXX fecerunt Asinius Olympus et Asinia Doris filio bene merenti, and CIL VI 10127 commemorating a twelve-year-old actress: Vivus Publius Fabius Publi mulieris libertus Faustus Phoebe Vocontia emboliaria artis omnium erudita hunc [= hanc] fatus suus pressit vixit annis XII Viva Pompeia Cnaei liberta Sabbatis. CIL XII 188 commemorates the twelve-year-old Septentrio qui Antipoli in theatro biduo saltavit et placuit (danced two days in the theatre of Antipolis and pleased). Laes (2011: 197) reads the boy's name as Serapion.

aristocratic families (Quint *Inst. Or.* 1.2.7). Prosopa was such a boy. He died when he was nine years old and had been freed at that time. In life he had been the *delicium* of Julia Augusta, that is, Livia and Livilla daughter of Antonia the Younger and Drusus. In literature we sometimes find sexual connotations (Stat. *Silv.* 5.5.66–9).¹⁴ This cannot be excluded, but it is important to emphasize that Romans never used terms of relationship in funerary epitaphs that in other contexts would be seen in a negative light. Not even the term *capillatus* is ever found in the epitaphs.¹⁵ In some instances parents commemorate their child who was someone else's *delicium*. Thus, Ephebus commemorates his son Primigenius who had been the *delicium* of Epagathus, an imperial freedman and official (*CIL* VI 8514). It is very difficult to imagine that Ephebus would have mentioned his son's relationship with Epagathus if the relationship had been of a sexual character.

CONCLUSION: A GOOD LIFE?

There was, however, no guarantee that such a slave child would continue being his or her owner's favorite when he or she grew up. In one of his letters Seneca mentions his slave Felicio, now an old man (*Ep.* 12.3). Seneca does not recognize him, and when Felicio reminds him that he used to be his *delicium* Seneca makes some rude jokes. He says that Felicio is a most suitable pet child as he is losing his teeth. It was probably better for a slave child to rely on his or her intelligence rather than on ephemeral good looks. We have met Gniphio and Melissus who, thanks to their intelligence, had made good careers despite their having started life as abandoned children. Suetonius also mentions Quintus Remmius Palaemon, who had started his career as a *verna* in the household of a woman and then became educated as a weaver (*Gram. et Rhet.* 23). For some reason he was then employed as a *paedagogus* for his owner's son. He listened to the teacher in school and thus learned to read. Later he was manumitted and moved to Rome where he became one of the leading grammarians. Melior was the *verna* of Sextus Aufustius Agreus in Ostia (*CIL* XIV 472). He was thirteen years old and a *calculator* (an accountant or teacher of math) when he died. Agreus, who besides being his owner was also his teacher (*praeceptor*), commemorated him with a long inscription praising his unusual intelligence. Melior was a much appreciated and beloved child. He had been fortunate. One hopes that the little Passia who was sold to Maximus Batonis had been equally fortunate and had not ended her life miserably, as so many slaves must have done.

The lives of lower-class children in Rome must frequently have been sad. Their hope for a good life and for social progress rested primarily on the goodwill of their owners or

¹⁴ Therefore, it is understandable that Christian Laes (2003) wants to see pederasty as part of the relationship to a *delicium*.

¹⁵ *Capillati* were young pretty slave boys who served as waiters in wealthy households. Occasionally we also find sexual connotations in connections with this type of slave boy (Petr. *Sat.* 57).

patroni and their own intelligence. But one more thing could have provided them with a sense of stability and a feeling of safety: belonging to a *domus*. Fortunately for slave children, the Romans did not understand family life in the way that we do now in modern Western society. Included within the family commemorations of many household tombs are anonymous dedications to “freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants” (*libertis libertabusque posterisque eorum*), that is, individuals who once may have held the status of a *Passia*. Romans felt strongly about the survival of their family name. But they did not care much whether the name survived through biological offspring or freedmen. If we leave Rome and go as far north on the Italian peninsula as is possible to the Augustan Regio X where the main city was the busy port city of Aquileia, many household tombstones that commemorate Romans belonging to those below the elite can be found. In these it is the norm for slaves, freedmen, and freedwomen to be included in the commemoration under their own names. One striking example is the tombstone that the freed businessman (*negotiator*) Fructus put up memorializing his household (*Inscriptiones Aquileiae* 1.715). This tombstone commemorated his common law wife (*contubernalis*) Minicia Potita, his mother Hilara, his two sisters Crispia Vitalis and Crispia Procula, his little *verna* (*vernaculus*) Gaius Minicius December, and the mother of December, Minicia Helpis. His freedman and heir (*libertus et heres*) was responsible for executing the wishes of Fructus. We do not know if the skeletons of these people would have shown malnourishment and too much hard physical work at too young an age. But at least they all had a strong sense of belonging, and this is amply displayed by Fructus’ tombstone. It should not be forgotten that until very recently children’s lives in the west were much closer to what we can glean from the sources as typical of the lives of Roman children. Roman ways of thinking about human beings were fundamentally different from ours. *Passia*, like the *vernaculus* and his mother from Aquileia, might have thought that their lives were good as long as they did not starve and as long as they belonged somewhere. A good life for members of the Roman lower classes, especially for their children, cannot in any way have been similar to what we think of as a good life.¹⁶

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¹⁶ The author would like to thank Judith Evans Grubbs and Tim Parkin for their angelic patience.

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CHAPTER 15

CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD IN ROMAN COMMEMORATIVE ART

LENA LARSSON LOVÉN

INTRODUCTION

THE focus of this chapter is children and childhood as they appear in a range of Roman commemorative monuments dating from the late Republic to the third century CE. In the first century BCE, major developments occurred in the portrayal of children, who henceforth became more regular subjects in commemorative media and in other artistic genres. From early imperial times children featured in the decorative schemes of public monuments and were to be found consistently in official art from the reign of Augustus to the early third century. Some of the most well-known and long-studied depictions of children in Roman public art—for example, those on the Ara Pacis Augustae, the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius in Rome, and the triumphal arch of Trajan in Beneventum—can tell us a great deal both about elite perceptions of children as Roman cultural symbols and about attitudes toward children of other ethnic origins (Currie 1996; Rawson 2001: 21–42; Uzzi 2005: 14–6).

This chapter, however, will concentrate on representations of nonmythical children in pre-Christian funerary iconography and, in particular, on memorials commissioned by private persons in Roman Italy. Discussion will cover a period of over three hundred years during which time children were commemorated in artistic form in most parts of Roman Italy but with chronological and regional variations. The majority of this evidence comes from the city of Rome and its vicinity. Accordingly, most of the examples discussed come from Rome, although their original context is often lost to us.

High infant and child mortality rates indicate that growing up in ancient Roman society was full of risks (Rawson 2003; see also Parkin in this volume). A Roman child was exposed to a number of circumstances that could lead to premature death, leaving many parents and other family members grieving for a dead child or sibling. Accordingly, many representations of Roman children are funerary in nature and reveal both how

their subjects were commemorated in images and in inscriptions and how close kin expressed feelings of loss and grief.

In what follows, three categories of child commemorations are considered. These illustrate the very different ways children were visualized and presented to the ancient viewer. They also reflect developments in pre-Christian child commemoration and in the various social roles of children over time. First to be discussed are funerary reliefs, with examples coming mostly from the city of Rome itself. In this memorial type we see groups of people, adults, and children of various ages. The second category consists of funerary altars, which appeared in the first century CE. Here, children appear frequently but are not primarily represented as members in a family context. Instead the imagery focuses more on the child itself and on attributes associated with childhood. Finally, images of children in the decorative panels of sarcophagi will be examined. This form of commemoration began in the early second century CE and became particularly popular from around the middle of that century. Scenes including children or representing the various stages of a child's life occur regularly in this genre. Taken together, these categories represent the various memorial types, chronological periods, artistic styles, and subjects that we can now explore in greater detail.

CHILDREN AS FAMILY MEMBERS ON FUNERARY RELIEFS

In antiquity the family was regarded as the central social institution from which ancient states were formed; as such, it was very important both to individuals and to society in general. This is reflected in the extensive legislation concerning the rights and status of the family in ancient law. However, not everyone had the right to form a legal family since this was normally dependent upon citizenship, which in turn formed the basis of a legal marriage and was a prerequisite for legitimate children. Children of legitimate status, especially sons, were vital for the continuity of the family line, while daughters could be used to create family links through marriage. Thus, having a family was a significant factor in an individual's legal status and served to place him or her within the social hierarchy.

A number of ancient sources, including evidence from the funerary realm, attest to the importance of the family for individuals, regardless of their social level. Inscriptions shed light on the means by which people commemorated family members of all ages. Their use was not limited to Roman Italy but was widespread, especially in urbanized areas of the western provinces (Saller and Shaw 1984). As Saller and Shaw demonstrated, evidence from the western Roman provinces makes it clear that the commemoration of a deceased family member in civilian and servile populations was commonly arranged by the nuclear family. We have many examples of parents who were given the unhappy and thankless duty of arranging the funeral and commemoration of a child who had

predeceased them. Occasionally, we are given a glimpse of their feelings and emotional distress as they express their grief in inscriptions (Carroll 2006:196–9; Laes 2011:100–6).

In the last century of the Roman Republic an increase in the popularity of funerary monuments decorated with both images and inscriptions meant that people from a wider social spectrum became more visible in funerary contexts. This tradition appears to have started in the city of Rome or its immediate vicinity. A regular feature in the design of these urban memorials was a horizontal relief displaying a group portrait. The groups may consist solely of adults or represent a mix of adults and one or two children (Kleiner 1977; Kockel 1993). The commissioners of group portrait monuments were often manumitted slaves, i.e., people from a humble social background (Zanker 1974–1975; Petersen 2006). The fact that an individual had the means to be commemorated at all, and that a memorial could be erected, was evidence of a successful life. The deceased's achievements could be emphasized further in the text and images that decorated the monument. Motifs were deliberately chosen to underpin the impression of success, both socially and economically. To an ex-slave, the rights to a legal marriage and to a family with legitimate children were markers of a new status and membership of a civic body; they also constituted all-important symbols of a successful life and social advancement.

When children appear in group reliefs they are normally depicted with bodily and facial features that give an overall impression of youth, but often their exact ages remain unspecified. Generally, those who appear seem to be between five and twelve years old, while babies and very young children are rare (Rawson 2003: 341). A relief in the collections of the Vatican Museum provides one of the few examples of what appears to be a small child or a baby, shown without clothes and accompanied by three adults (Kockel 1993: 132–3, Taf. 31c, 39a–c; Huskinson 2007: 326).

In general, boys enjoyed a higher status than girls in both Roman society and the family, and sons were necessary to ensure the future of a family line. This helps to explain why, in group portraits, boys occur with greater frequency than girls. Sons, especially freeborn sons of ex-slaves, were clear markers of the end of life as a slave and the beginning of a new phase of life with the possibility of founding a new family line, with more generations to come.

A relief from Rome, dating to circa 40 BCE, serves to illustrate several of the iconographic characteristics of late Republican group portraits previously discussed (Figure 15.1). The relief, a framed marble slab now immured in the cloister of St. John in the Lateran, depicts a group of freed people consisting of a boy and three adults: two men and one woman (Zanker 1974–1975: 294–6, Abb. 32; Kleiner 1977: 242–3 no. 82, with fig. 82; Kockel 1993: 109–10, Taf. 21c, 23a–d; George 2006: 20, fig. 1). The boy's name, C. Gavius Rufus, is known from the inscription below the portraits, along with his designation as *Spu(rii) f(ilius)* (son of Spurius) signifying his illegitimate status. The boy is wearing a toga, the mark of Roman citizenship that was forbidden to slaves; this suggests he was free. His mother evidently was free when he was born, but his father may have still been a slave at the time. Had Rufus been the son of a Roman citizen, he is likely to have worn the *bulla* around his neck. This protective pendant was given to baby boys,



FIGURE 15.1 Funerary relief of the Gavii family. In the courtyard of St. John the Lateran, Rome. (Photo courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom DAI. D-DAI-ROM-6357.)

nine days after their birth, at the *lustratio*, a ceremony in which the child was named and officially accepted as a family member (Rawson 2003: 110–1; Dasen 2011: 303–5; see also the chapter by McWilliam in this volume). Many children, and especially younger boys in family groups, are shown wearing *bullae* on other memorials to freed slaves from this period (cf. Figure 15.3). There is some debate as to whether *bullae* were given to baby girls as well as to boys.¹ Both young sons and daughters of Roman citizens were entitled to wear the toga, but as yet we have no iconographic evidence for the use of *bullae* among



FIGURE 15.2 Funerary relief enwalled in a modern building at via Portico d'Ottavia 2, Rome. The child holds a pet. (Photo courtesy the author.)

¹ A *lustratio* was held for freeborn girls too, but eight days after birth (Rawson 2003: 110–1). For a discussion of *bullae* see Palmer 1989 [1998].

girls. That they wore other protective amulets, however, is entirely plausible. Since the *bulla* was a symbol of freeborn status, it was a significant identifier of freeborn sons in family groups and was frequently used in representations of groups of freed slaves in the late Republic and early empire.

The inscription on the frame under the portraits in the Lateran relief (Figure 15.1) also identifies each adult by name and makes it clear that all were manumitted. Like the boy, the adult males are also dressed in togas. Since this garment was a marker of a Roman citizen, it held particular importance for those who had not always had the right to wear it. The woman, Gavia Asia, and the man on the other side of the boy, C. Gavius Dardanus, are likely to be the boy's parents. This group could be read as a core family in an extended family unit that also included Dardanus' brother, C. Gavius Salvius, who appears at the far right of the panel. The inscription above the portraits reveals that all except Salvius were still living at the time the relief was made and that both men were carpenters. Labor is another regular feature of funerary iconography from the late Republican period. Although we know from other sources that Roman children worked, sometimes from an early age (Bradley 1991: 103–24; Laes 2011: 148–221; see also Sigismund-Nielsen in this volume), in funerary reliefs work is usually related to adults (Zimmer 1982). Here, it is referenced discretely in an inscription rather than with a display of the tools associated with carpentry, and no links at all are made between the child and any kind of work.

The arrangement of figures in the Lateran relief is also typical of the time, with a group of people arranged horizontally, as if looking out a window. In many images with mixed age groups, children occupy the center of the composition. A relief in the Louvre depicting a boy flanked by four adults, two on either side, provides an example of this arrangement (Kockel 1993: 208–9; Taf. 128a). This kind of relief seldom contextualizes children or adults in an environment such as in an indoor or outdoor situation. Occasionally a child is shown with a pet, as in the worn relief in which a boy holds a pet dog, originally from the Via Appia and now in a modern building on Via del Portico d'Ottavia 2 in Rome (Figure 15.2; Kockel 1993: 158–9; Taf. 72, 73a–d).

There is, furthermore, very seldom any physical contact or strong emotion displayed by people in group portraits. This is especially true of reliefs from the late Republic, but in general only a limited range of gestures creating physical contact were used. Among the most common of these was the *dextrarum iunctio*, the handshake between husband and wife that symbolized a legal marriage (Mander 2012a: 70). However, occasional exceptions to this general rule do exist. Some physical contact is displayed by the family group in the so-called relief of Epictes (Kockel 1993: 126–7; Taf. 31c). Here, at the far left a veiled woman in three-quarter profile holds out her right arm and touches the man at the right of the scene. She has placed her hand on his right arm, but the toga-clad man does not respond to the woman with any reciprocal bodily contact or gesture. A child, most likely a boy of freeborn status given the *bulla* that he wears around his neck, is placed between the man and the woman, but there is no obvious physical contact between the child and the adults.

Over time, the pattern of strictly arranged groups of individuals evolved to include other settings and greater bodily contact. In the first century CE we regularly find family



FIGURE 15.3 Family scene with two adults and a boy with a *bulla*. (Photo by the author. Courtesy Musei Vaticani.)

groups exhibiting more interaction and more physical contact. A funerary relief in the Vatican Museum dated to 30–40 CE provides an example (Figure 15.3). Here, the group consists of three people: two adults, a man and a woman, and a boy. The boy is shown in the center of the composition standing between the adults, and the three are linked by their gestures and physical contact. The child's left arm touches the right arm of the woman to his left and the man has his left arm around the shoulders of the child; in this way all are linked as a family group (Kockel 1993:196–7; Taf. 111a; 112 a, c; 113a–d). In this case there are no inscriptions recording their names or other personal details, but an iconographic reading shows a family of two generations, with parents and a freeborn son in a harmonious and prosperous setting complete with fruit and birds. The boy has the *bulla* and is wearing a toga; both are signs of his freeborn status.

Another example of a family depiction in which links and bonds are created through physical contact is the partially restored Sertorii relief, from the Ince Blundell Collections in Liverpool, in which a large group of five people is shown (Figure 15.4). The group is made up of two children (a boy and a girl) and three adults (Kockel 1993: 198–9; Taf. 111c). The girl appears to be a couple of years older than the boy, and the children are placed on each side of the adult man who is in the center of the scene, the boy at his right and the girl at his left right; the women are shown at each end of this group. The boy has a *bulla* around his neck, but the girl does not, making this an unusually clear example of the gender-specific use of the *bulla*. A similar figural arrangement is found in another relief from Rome showing two adults and two children, a boy and a girl. There too the boy has a *bulla*, but the girl does not (pp. 198–9; Taf. 111c, 114a–b; Huskinson 2007: 325, fig. 17.2).

The south frieze of the Augustan Altar of Peace (Ara Pacis) in Rome provides another example, this time on a public monument, of the use of the *bulla* as an attribute for

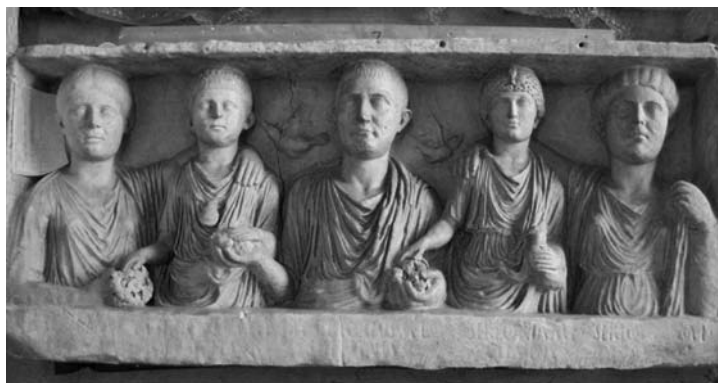


FIGURE 15.4 The Sertorii relief, Ince Blundell Collections. (Photo courtesy Helena Lunt, Ince Blundell Hall, Liverpool/Rupert Harris Conservation, London.)

boys rather than for girls. The decoration of the Ara Pacis has long been the subject of many discussions of Augustan ideology and social policies. These included a political program promoting procreation and traditional family norms and values, most clearly demonstrated in the Julian laws of 18/17 BCE, a set of laws on marriage and morals (see also McGinn in this volume). The erection of the Ara Pacis was initiated only a few years later, in 13 BCE, and the appearance of Augustus' family on this monument is not coincidental. Until this time neither women nor children had been frequent subjects in the decoration of public monuments (Kampen 1981; Uzzi 2005).

On the Ara Pacis, the appearance of a large family group that included both women and children can be seen as an illustration of the Augustan laws for promoting families and children, with the imperial family serving as role models for Roman citizens (Kleiner 1993: 44–7). In both the north frieze and the south frieze (where Augustus himself and members of his family appear), children are included in the procession. One group of children on the southern side consists of two Roman boys and a girl. The younger boy, who is dressed in a toga and has a *bulla* around his neck, appears to be around two years old and has been identified as Germanicus, the oldest son of Antonia the Younger, niece of Augustus, and Drusus the Elder, son of the empress Livia. The other two children are Germanicus' cousins, Domitia and her brother Domitius, the children of Antonia the Elder and Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus (p. 33). Both boys have a *bulla*, but Domitia, like the girl in the Sertorii relief (Figure 15.4), does not. At the time of the consecration of the altar in 13 BCE, Domitia would have been about eight years old (George 2001: 184–5). However, she does have a pendant shaped like a new moon, a *lunula*, which may have had a protective function comparable to the *bulla* for boys.

The practice of erecting memorials with portrait groups was not restricted to Rome but was diffused from the metropolis throughout Roman Italy. In Cisalpine Gaul, this practice was well received, and in early imperial times local traditions and artistic styles of commemorative art were developed and established there. The decorative panels of memorials in the north were often vertical, in contrast to the horizontal arrangements

typical of the city of Rome. This affected the disposition of the portraits depicted, which were now displayed at different levels (Pflug 1989). More clearly than in the window-like arrangements from Rome, the vertical form of a stele offered the opportunity to emphasize the status of a person according to a hierarchical system where the higher up on a stele the portrait was placed, the higher the status of the person depicted. When both adults and children appear on the same stele, the person at the uppermost level is normally an adult man or a (married) couple. Children appear on the lower levels, with boys tending to have higher positions than girls and freeborn children having primacy over those born in slavery. This arrangement reflects very clearly the subordination in Roman society of children in relation to adults and the higher status of freeborn over nonfree and of boys over girls. While they may have been visualized differently, the motifs used in the northern regions of Roman Italy, however, largely related to the same norms and family values displayed in Rome itself (George 2005: 55–66). In neither of the regions were the children contextualized in an environment.

CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD SYMBOLS ON FUNERARY ALTARS

Funerary altars appeared as a new memorial type for both adults and children during the reign of Tiberius (14–37 CE) and became particularly popular around the middle of the first century CE. A funerary altar could measure from as little as approximately 0.30 m to as much as 2 m high, but the majority are about 1 m in height. They were set up along the main roads leading to a town or in open-air precincts (Kleiner 1987: 17, 31–2).

On funerary altars, as on funerary reliefs and other commemorative art, both images and inscriptions express perceptions of a child's premature death and unfulfilled life. When compared with funerary reliefs, however, altars present striking contrasts in the visualization of children. The age of children on altars span from infancy up to the mid-teens, although there is an emphasis on representations of children under the age of about ten or eleven (Kleiner 1987: 58; Rawson 2003: 340–1) and the age of death is more often specified in altar inscriptions. On altars children could be depicted not only in portrait busts but also in full-length portraits; sometimes context was provided with symbols of childhood and pets. Not only is there a wider age span for child representations on altars, but children also appear more as individuals in their own right and are not primarily commemorated as family members (Kleiner 1987: 74). Family groups may also appear in the decoration of altars, but a child is more often the only person in the image (Huskinson 2007: 228–9). Altars commemorating children were normally raised by the parents or close kin and, like funerary reliefs, primarily by freedmen (Kleiner 1987: 74; Huskinson 1996: 32). The adult commemorator(s) may not be seen in the image but can appear indirectly by being mentioned in an inscription (Kleiner 1987: 45). A funerary altar in Boston displays several characteristics of this type of monument.

Here, Anthus, the boy commemorated, is shown dressed in a toga, with a book scroll in his hand and a pet dog by his feet. The altar is dated to c. 50–70 CE and was commissioned by the boy's father, Lucius Iulius Gamus, to his sweetest son. The father does not appear in the image but is mentioned by name in the inscription (*CIL* 6.11864).

Sometimes, however, children and adults (most commonly family members) appear together (see Kleiner 1987: 127–9 cat. no. 20, pl. XII.3). A funerary altar in the Louvre is just such an example. This altar was raised by Julius Secundus, father and husband of two deceased females, to his eleven-year-old daughter Julia Secunda and his wife Cornelia Tyche, who both drowned in an accident (*CIL* 6.20674; Kleiner 1987: 253–6, cat. no. 113). In the pediment above the portraits are attributes of Diana, the goddess of hunting in Roman mythology; the left side of the altar originally bore a stag, one of the goddess' symbols. On a minority of altars mythological or divine allusions occur, more often for children than for adults. Deities associated with children were Venus and Diana for girls, while Hercules, Apollo, and the Dioscuri were commonly used for boys. In this way a deceased girl might be associated with the female beauty of Venus or a boy with the strength of Hercules. The assimilation of children to divinities or heroes can be seen as a visual expression of a predeceased child's passage from an earthly life to immortality and, again, a lost hope of a fulfilled life (Kleiner 1987: 84–8; Huskinson 2007: 331–2).

Occasionally adults and children interact in scenes on funerary altars (Kleiner 1987: 236–7, cat. no. 100, pl. LVII.1–2). A rare example appears on one of the *arae Passienorum*, two altars commissioned by the same man, L. Passien(i)us Saturninus, to commemorate his family. The altars, now in Stockholm and Liverpool, date to around 140 CE and are similar in size; both are decorated with an inscription and portraits on the front face. The altar in Stockholm shows a man and a woman of mature age, both mentioned by name in the inscription as L. Passien(i)us Saturninus and Passienia Gemella (*CIL* 6.23848.) On the altar in Liverpool, Passienia Gemella appears flanked by two boys, probably her sons (Figure 15.5). Passienia Gemella was a woman of freed status, and her sons were possibly of different status. The older may have been slave born, while the younger may have been born after her manumission and thus was a freeborn child. On each lateral face of the Liverpool altar a woman is shown interacting with a child. On one she embraces a young boy (Kleiner 1987: 225–7 cat. no. 91, pl. L.2); on the other she is with an older boy (pl. L.3).²

An elaborate funerary altar embodying a variety of aspects of a child's death was erected in Rome at the end of the first century CE to the memory of a boy, Quintus Sulpicius Maximus. (Figure 15.6).³ The memorial was commissioned by the boy's parents and was put up along the Via Salaria, one of the main roads from Rome. In the later third century it was incorporated in the Aurelian city wall at Porta Salaria (Rawson

² See Kleiner 1987: 225–6, no. 91, pls. L.2–4; Boschung and Davies 2005: figs. 1–2, 8–11; Davies 2010: 186–90.

³ Kleiner 1987: 162–5, no. 45, pls. XXVIII 1–2; Rawson 1997: 222–3, fig. 9.9. On Q. Sulpicius Maximus and his poem, see the chapter by Golden in this volume.



FIGURE 15.5 Funerary altar of Passienia Gemella and her two sons. World Museum Liverpool. (Photo courtesy National Museums Liverpool.)

2003: 17–20) and was rediscovered in 1871 when the eastern tower of the gateway was destroyed (Kleiner 1987: 162). The altar, 1.61 m high, is crowned by a triangular pediment and shows a full-length statue of the boy, placed in a niche. On either side of the niche and below it is a long inscription in both Latin (*CIL* 6.33976) and Greek (*IG* 14.2012). The boy is shown dressed in a toga, and his left hand holds a book scroll. At the time of his death Quintus Sulpicius Maximus was only eleven years old and was apparently both talented and already well educated. At the third Capitoline festival, he competed against more than fifty contestants and won an honorable mention after improvising a long poem in Greek. This poem is carved on each side of the portrait statue.

The third Capitoline festival was held in 94 CE during the reign of the emperor Domitian, and the boy died a couple of months after his successful participation at the festival. This information makes it possible to date the memorial to the end of the first century, somewhere between 94 and 100 CE. The lack of filiation in the names of the parents, Q. Sulpicius Eugramus and Licinia Januaria, suggest that they may have been manumitted slaves or of illegitimate birth, while their son was certainly freeborn. On the memorial he is presented as an educated Roman citizen dressed in a toga and several years older than his actual age at the time of his death. He appears to be in his late teens

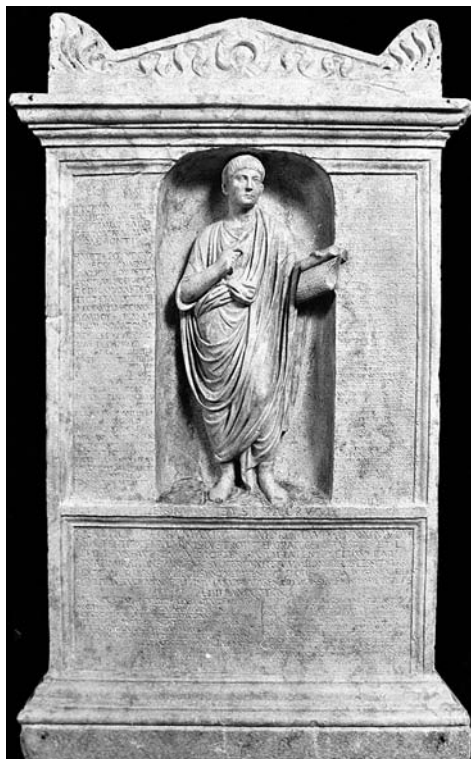


FIGURE 15.6 Funerary altar of Quintus Sulpicius Maximus who died at the age 11 and was commemorated by his parents. (Photo courtesy Musei Capitolini, Centrale Montemartini, Archivio Fotografico dei Musei Capitolini. With permission.)

or early twenties and is shown as he was expected to have become had he lived. The inscription describes a child with an unusual intellectual capacity, and the boy seems to have been given the chance to hone his skills. However, at the age of eleven, Sulpicius died from weariness and disease and made his parents “most unhappy” (*infelicissimi*).

In a society where not all children could expect to reach adulthood (see the chapter by Parkin in this volume), this boy had survived the most vulnerable phase of a child’s life and had reached an age of just over eleven years, yet he died prematurely. One assumes the death of a child would have been a great loss in any family. To a couple of manumitted status, as most certainly in this case, a freeborn son would have held a particular importance as an indicator of success in life and social advancement. Motherhood was an esteemed role that conferred prestige on a woman, especially if she gave birth to sons (Dixon 1988: 71–3). For a female ex-slave to give birth to a legitimate freeborn son was a distinct mark of her social and legal advancement. For the parents of Q. Sulpicius Maximus, and many other families in the same social situation, the loss of a child, and especially a freeborn son of manumitted parents, may have dashed hopes for the future (d’Ambra 2007: 340).

A MORE FLEXIBLE WORLD OF ROMAN CHILDREN

In the second century CE, as cremation burials were gradually replaced by inhumation, sarcophagi came into use as yet another commemorative genre. Like funerary reliefs and altars, sarcophagi were used for adults and children alike. However, they differed in function from the earlier memorial types, because sarcophagi were normally placed inside a tomb building. A sarcophagus was usually rectangular but with variations in size; decoration usually appears on three sides, with a fourth, nondecorated, side placed against a wall. The long, narrow front face offered the opportunity to create linear compositions and new narrative motifs. Dedicatory inscriptions were normally placed on a central panel of the lid (Huskinson 2007: 332–3); however, since the inscriptions are often lost, children's sarcophagi are usually identified by their smaller size and the choice of decoration (d'Ambra 2007: 341).

During the course of the second century CE, sarcophagi became more and more popular. Early in the century the number of motifs used was rather limited, but a more creative phase began in the middle of the century with the development of a range of new subjects, some related exclusively to children and childhood (Huskinson 1996: 123). In contrast to child representation in the aforementioned genres, now groups of children appear in lively scenes that are full of action, movement, and interaction between children. Children in chariot races from the circus are among the most popular motifs employed (pp. 27–8; d'Ambra 2007). Other popular scenes include children playing games, for instance with nuts, as on the sarcophagus (now in the British Museum) of the boy Aemilius Daphnus (Figure 15.8; Walker 1985: 43, fig. 12; Huskinson 2007: 334, fig. 17.4).

In the dynamic phase of iconographic development of the mid-second century CE, the world of children was presented on sarcophagi in a more flexible way than in earlier commemorative media. Some subjects were exclusive to children; other popular scenes were adapted for children from the existing visual repertoire of adults (Huskinson 2007: 335). Children are sometimes depicted as cupids in scenes where they are playing or at circus races. The mythological disguise offered possibilities to represent them in ways that differed from social norms and the behavior of adults (Huskinson 2005: 95).

More common than scenes of children playing are biographical scenes. Key stages in a child's life such as birth, education, and death are regularly represented on sarcophagi, especially to commemorate boys (Huskinson 2007: 333). Birth, the first key moment in a child's life, is not itself depicted, but it is referenced symbolically by a scene of the baby's first bath (Amedick 1991: 60–1). This is often presented according to an iconographic topos in which the baby is never shown alone but appears in the company of several adult figures, usually women but not necessarily the child's mother (see Dixon 1988: 106). The scene is presented in considerable detail (Kampen 1981; Huskinson 1996: 10–12). Scenes including babies became an established and regular choice for inclusion on sarcophagi from the mid-second century CE, revealing a new interest in representing babies and

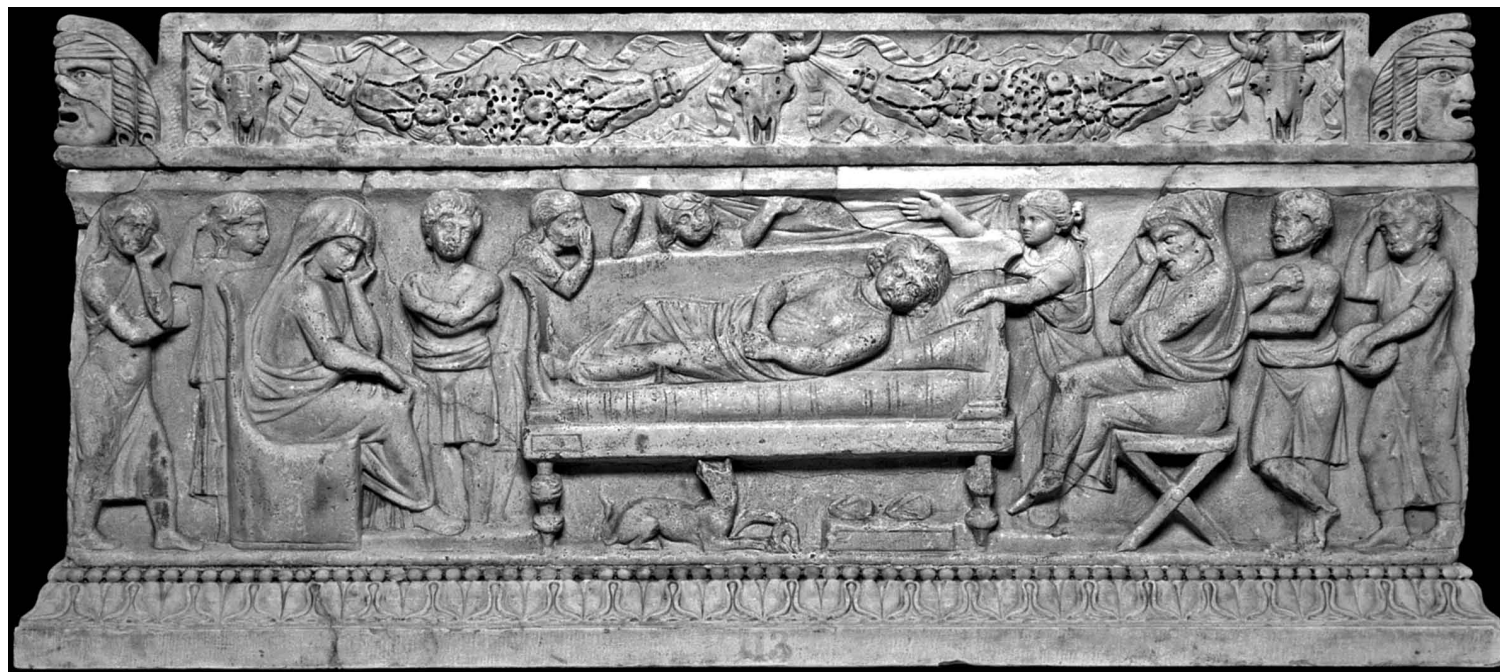


FIGURE 15.7 Sarcophagus with a *conclamatio* scene over a dead girl. From Rome. British Museum, London. (Photo courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.)



FIGURE 15.8 Lively scenes of groups of boys playing with nuts on a sarcophagus made for a boy named Lucius Aemelius Daphnus. British Museum, London. (Photo courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.)

very young children compared with representations on reliefs and altars. Education was another key stage in a child's life and was represented in a standard scene showing a child, normally a boy, reading for a seated man. The latter, who is the teacher, is usually depicted with a beard and a *himation*, reflecting Greek prototypes. This scene appears frequently on sarcophagi and was used for both adults and children, and in particular for males of any age (Amedick 1991: 65).

One significant difference between the iconography of sarcophagi and that of both funerary reliefs and altars is that sarcophagi sometimes include scenes depicting the child as dead. This is the *conclamatio* scene, which shows the deceased child lying on a couch, the *lectus funebris*, normally surrounded by grieving adults (Figure 15.7). This scene, showing a child's death at home, was particularly popular in the mid-second century CE (Huskinson 1996: 13–5) and was more frequently used for girls than for boys (Huskinson 2007: 333). Sometimes, the *conclamatio* scene appears as the focal point of a sarcophagus' decoration; more often than not, however, it is part of a biographical sequence (Amedick 1991: 68, 71). One example of a *conclamatio* scene as the main subject is a marble sarcophagus in the British Museum, which commemorates a girl who is shown lying on the couch with her hands folded in her lap. Under the bed are the little girl's sandals, and a small dog is playing with a garland that has perhaps fallen from the girl's lifeless hands. On each side of the couch sits a veiled adult—a woman on the left and a man on the right. These are the child's parents, both of whom are represented making gestures of grief. More adults also appear on the sarcophagus, all making gestures of mourning (British Museum, inv. no. Sc 2315; Walker 1985: 49, fig. 40; Huskinson 1996: 13, 21, no. 1.11, pl. 3.3).

Sarcophagi representing children and childhood as a separate stage of life experienced a peak in popularity in the mid-third century CE. After this, Christian iconography with scenes inspired by biblical figures and episodes developed. In this new Christian imagery the same types of scenes were largely used for both adults and children, leading to a decline in specific child representations (Huskinson 2005: 97–9) and to the development of other commemorative forms such as catacomb painting (see Kreiger in this volume). Children decreased in visibility, both in their own right and as socialized members of a family; in fact, there is a parallel and general decline in family images in late antiquity (Kampen 2007).

CONCLUSION: ROMAN CHILD COMMEMORATION OVER THE CENTURIES

For more than three hundred years, from the late Republic to the later third century CE, Roman children appear as regular subjects in various commemorative contexts. However, the type of monuments used and their iconography changed over the time. During the early first century BCE, children were generally depicted as members of a

family group. In such images both boys and girls appear as socialized family members from the age of around five or six years old, although the exact age of a child is seldom clearly specified. Boys are shown more frequently than girls, reflecting the higher status of boys and sons over girls and daughters in a social as well as a family context. This is not to say that daughters were not loved and appreciated by their families, but in terms of status sons were more important. Many commissioners of group portraits were freed men and women of humble social background to whom manumission meant a radical change in their legal position and could also bring a social advancement, not least through children. To people of manumitted status, a legal marriage and a family with legitimate offspring, particularly males, were crucial markers of a new position in the social hierarchy. A freeborn son was especially important because he encapsulated the social success of the parents and offered the future prospect of creating a new family line of freeborn citizens. A daughter did not have the same status as a son, but through marriage she could still be of use in promoting the social and financial position of the family. Thus, the primary role of children in this artistic genre is as members of a family group, not as individuals or children per se but as symbols of the advancement of the parents and future hope for the family.

In the first century CE funerary altars appeared as a new form of commemoration for both adults and children. Like funerary reliefs, these were largely commissioned by freedmen. When they appear on altars children are depicted as individuals in their own right rather than as members of family groups. Often a child is the only person depicted, and they are sometimes accompanied by symbols of childhood. Altars were often erected to commemorate children by their parents or other close kin, and although adults may be mentioned in an inscription accompanying an image they rarely appear in the image itself; in funerary reliefs, by comparison, adults had regularly outnumbered children. In spite of this increased focus on the child itself, however, representations of children on altars were still very much influenced by the social and intellectual qualities of adults. They can be depicted as older than their age at death, as in the case of eleven-year-old Q. Sulpicius Maximus, who appears with adult attributes reflecting the unfulfilled expectations of a child who died before reaching adulthood (Figure 15.6; Huskinson 1997: 236–7).

Funerary iconography on sarcophagi differs from that on altars as adults and children regularly appear together in biographical scenes. On a curriculum vitae sarcophagus a child's—and more particularly a boy's—life would normally be represented by a sequence of symbolic scenes such as birth, education, and death—all core moments involving adults. There are two obvious changes in the representation of children on sarcophagi compared with funerary reliefs and altars. One is the regular appearance of babies and infants. These age groups are practically invisible in funerary reliefs and they appear only occasionally in the decoration of altars. On sarcophagi, scenes that include babies became increasingly popular from the mid-second century CE, which reflect a new interest in representing even the very youngest children. Another significant development saw the depiction of children as deceased. Although all commemorative monuments relate to death, very rarely are children actually depicted as dead. In *conclamatio*

scenes on sarcophagi, however, deceased children are shown on their deathbeds, and the consequence of a child's death to parents and relations is clearly articulated. Family members are shown gathered around the deathbed, with the parents normally seated on either side of the *lectus funebris*, their grief over a lost child expressed visually through gestures and body postures. The *conclamatio* scene is an exception to the widespread practice in Roman commemorative monuments of presenting deceased children as alive and healthy.

The changes that we have mapped raise questions about how children can be contextualized in various modes of representation and whether artistic variations reflect changes in attitudes and emotions concerning children. Funerary reliefs as well as altars were most frequently commissioned by freedmen. To them a freeborn child, especially a son, was a mark of success. It was of particular importance to demonstrate the existence of a freeborn child, even one who had not lived to adulthood, and to show the family's financial capacity to raise a memorial to a deceased child. In the case of sarcophagi, the link between the commissioners' social status and this specific memorial type is more ambiguous than for earlier funerary monuments, particularly funerary reliefs (Huskinson 1996: 82–5).

In general, Roman art did not express a wide range of sentiments among, or physical contact between, its subjects. Nor, with the exception of *conclamatio* scenes on sarcophagi, do commemorative scenes regularly reflect strong emotions. Through epigraphy we can gain some insight into emotions relating to a child's death. Roman parents commonly expressed feelings of personal grief over lost children in inscriptions by relatively short, standard phrases (Sigismund-Nielsen 1997; King 2000; McWilliam 2001). The death of a child in any family, not only in families with parents of manumitted status, could well have been a turning point in their personal lives. The use of short standard phrases may seem to a modern reader to reveal a matter-of-fact attitude regarding the expression of sorrow and very distressing emotional states, perhaps emanating from strong emotions and personal loss beyond comprehension. However, in general, expressions of personal grief and affection are difficult to read across cultures and we may not be able to comprehend fully the personal emotions embedded in standardized epigraphic phrases. Still, we may assume that for any family to lose a child prematurely was a bitter blow.

The grief and sorrow caused by a child's death is the underlying driving force behind any memorial type where children are commemorated, but a number of factors must be considered when discussing how children and ideas of childhood were shaped and presented to the ancient viewer. The design of each memorial category was directed by conventions, practices, and limitations that affected how children were represented in a specific genre. Each genre must therefore be contextualized in a time and social setting. Images of children in commemorative arts will present a general view of how Roman children looked, of how they were dressed, of differences in gender and status between children, and of the expectations of children's future social roles. The greater emphasis on status rather than emotions that one generally finds in Roman art means that visual evidence cannot provide a complete picture of changes over time in attitudes toward

children. However, the rich source of commemorative art, for instance, demonstrates clearly that the perceived social roles of Roman children changed over time. In spite of the conventions and limitations directing the modes of commemorating, a close reading of images is a means of reaching a better understanding of the history of children and childhood in antiquity.

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CHAPTER 16

TOYS, DOLLS, AND THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF CHILDHOOD

MARY HARLOW

INTRODUCTION

CHILDREN in the Roman world played with toys and games of many kinds: some were specially constructed with the child in mind; others were no doubt items to hand that inventive children used in various ways. However, behind these apparently rather self-evident statements lies a complexity of interpretation governed by the context in which “toys” are found and that raises questions such as when is a toy not a toy or when is it so much more than just a toy.¹

In contemporary modern life the most obvious sign of the presence of a child in a household is the vast array of usually colorful toys and playthings and a panoply of specially designed equipment such as cots, high chairs, and reduced-size chairs and tables and whole rooms given over as special spaces for children in nurseries, bedrooms, and playrooms. The presence of a child is immediately visually and materially obvious, and the types of playthings and specialized furniture might even give an indication of the age and gender of that child and the socioeconomic status of the family. Children themselves, however, interact with this material world as a whole, not just the parts of it that are deemed created for them by their parents and other adults, and a child’s experience of the world is not curtailed by these “child-friendly” areas. Likewise, a child will turn anything into a plaything: a broom becomes a horse, and even if used to sweep in

¹ I have to thank both Leslie Shumka and Fanny Dolansky for their generosity in sharing their research with me. Leslie sent me a copy of her 1993 MA thesis “Children and Toys in the Roman World: A Contribution to the History of the Roman Family”; Fanny allowed me to read a draft copy of her article, “Playing with Gender: Girls, Dolls and Adult Ideals in the Roman World,” *Classical Antiquity* 31(2): 256–92. This chapter owes much to their research and ideas and is undoubtedly the better for it. Any errors remain my own.

imitation of adult activity it will not perform in the same way as in an adult's hands. A child's everyday interaction with the material world is not controlled and mediated by adults at all times, and, even in the modern world, time outside adult space and control is hard to record. For antiquity this is only the start of the problem; while—as this volume demonstrates—there is a wealth of information about children, tracking how they engage with the material world is difficult.²

TOYS AND PLAYTHINGS

Extensive research in the past three decades has given us new insights into the social use of Roman domestic space and the rhythms of daily life as seen in a variety of families in the empire, but we still find it very hard to locate children in the physical space of the household. This raises the matter of where, with what, and when children played. Small finds discovered in domestic contexts that have been identified as games and toys might have belonged to children and testify to their presence, but adults also played with balls, knucklebones, board games, dice, and the like. Moreover, the lack of defined space in the house also says something about the interrelationship between children and other inhabitants and may be read in many ways: it may imply that children are marginalized in the family and not considered full members of society until they reach an age approaching adulthood; it could suggest that they are fully integrated members of the household who range freely in the space and are allowed access to all areas; or it could simply reflect archeological or historical invisibility. The reality for the upper classes is possibly a mixture of all these, given the daily rituals that dictated the use of the domestic space of the home and the role of nonparent carers in the upbringing of young children.³ For less well-off families the situation would be different again: in the smaller dwellings or apartment blocks of larger towns it is hard to locate space that would fit with any modern sense of family life—for instance, rooms that might allow for privacy. Here the space must have been multipurpose and served as sleeping, working, eating, and general living quarters. Children here may have had less time to play and spent more time generally helping the household survive. In all these spaces, and on the streets and in the fields, children presumably played. They would have made use of things to hand, sticks, stones, broken pottery, and earth perhaps (Epictetus 3.13.18), in even the poorest homes. They may also have made use of household objects as playthings: for instance, small

² For an excellent introduction to the problems of children and material culture see Sofaer Derevenski 2000; see also the chapter by Langdon in this volume.

³ There is now a large bibliography of the social use of domestic space. See, for example, Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 1994, 1996; Hales 2003; Nevett 2010. Shumka 1993: 58–62 directly addressed the problem of recreational space. On nonparent carers see Bradley 1991; Rawson 2003: 130–3; see also the chapter by McWilliam in this volume.

spindle whorls would fit neatly into little hands and can be rolled or spun, loom weights have potential as building bricks, and both make good noises when knocked together.

Numerous surviving artifacts generally labeled “toys” and playthings and a fair amount of literary and iconographic evidence provide apparent vignettes of children playing. But as with most things in the ancient world, the material culture and literary and visual evidence do not neatly dovetail to create a homogenous picture. How do we identify the material culture of childhood that was either chosen by adults or created by the child? How might it be different from the material culture of adulthood? Using such generic terms as childhood and adulthood is also problematic: there are many childhoods and many adulthoods. Looking for the material culture of childhoods in the past requires us to be very circumspect about what we claim belongs specifically to the realm of the child. This issue is further problematized by the fact that artifacts apparently securely associated with children (as opposed to childhood *per se*) are, in the main, found in identifiable burial contexts. Even here, however, we cannot be certain if grave goods belonged to the child or were chosen by the commemorators to represent the child or to serve a particular purpose in the afterlife, or for the funerary rite itself, or had some cultic association; still less can we tell if these artifacts were treasured by the child and marked his or her own view of their material world. This makes any grave goods open to a number of interpretations, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Furthermore, it is very difficult to sex juvenile skeletal remains (under the age of twelve), so in older excavation reports the grave goods have sometimes been used as an indicator of the sex of the deceased, with no other supporting evidence. This creates a circular and gendered argument that is not helpful. The dolls discussed in this chapter are associated with graves for which either the body or an identifying inscription survives, unless otherwise stated.⁴

Not all the items discussed here were found exclusively in burial contexts associated with children, but the probability of them being part of a child’s life is high enough for them to be included and to be relatively securely accepted as part of the child’s interaction with society and materiality. The different phases of childhood—infancy, toddler, middle childhood, and early adolescence—need also to be taken into account, and we need to be alert to the danger of reading modern assumptions about age stages into the material.⁵ As children grow, their demand and need for particular types of playthings evolves. Tiny babies may be amused by movement and noise but unable to maintain hold of an item to amuse themselves. As children grow in dexterity they can first hold, shake, and bang little things that might distract or please them with sound; they can push and hold balls and chase after them, even if on all fours. A very young child does not need much in terms of specially fabricated material to be amused. Once a child is mobile a new range

⁴ For discussions of the problem of artifacts belonging to children and different ranges of interpretation see Ricotti 1995: 20; Sofaer Derevenski 2000: 6–12; and other papers in Sofaer Derevenski. For the problems with aging skeletons, see Scheuer and Black 2000; chapter 2 deals specifically with skeletal development and aging).

⁵ On the ancient life course see Harlow and Laurence 2002; Parkin 2010.

of playthings is accessible. Push and pull-along items take on a new dimension once they can be moved across space by a child who can also begin to create an imaginary world for them to inhabit. It is hard to think of a plaything that does not have some educational aspect: some are more implicit in that a child will learn dexterity and calculations when at play (e.g., knucklebones), and others are more explicit (building bricks with letters on them or dice); at every stage of childhood such toys play different and varied roles in the life of the child. Dolls and miniature copies of daily life objects can open up a world of imaginative play, while at the same time they can inculcate social values and traditional gender roles and also perhaps subvert them in the hands and minds of imaginative children.⁶

Rattles of various descriptions are found throughout the Roman world. These come in a variety of sizes and shapes and are made from various materials, including silver, bronze, terracotta, and plaster. Some are simply spherical or oval, but others are like small busts, like the mother and child illustrated here (Figure 16.1) or are zoomorphic in form with painted or incised details in the shapes of pigs, dogs, chickens, cocks, and other birds as well as some hybrids, for example, the body of a bird with the addition of stag's antlers.⁷ Some are shaped to fit neatly in a small hand, while others have a handle of some description. The noise seems to be made by putting tiny pebbles or clay balls inside the hollow body of the rattle, and, as today, they were used to amuse and distract babies



FIGURE 16.1 A pipe-clay rattle in the shape of seated mother and child. Campania H. 16.8 cm ca. 100–200 CE. This could also be an example of *sigillaria*. (Courtesy British Museum.)

⁶ For a selection of images of toys in the Roman world see the catalogs of *Jouer dans l'Antiquité* and Bertelli et al. 2008.

⁷ Shumka 1993: 105–9, cat. nos. 71–83; Coulon 1994/2004: 76–9; Ricotti 1995: 18–24 (where *crepundia* of all types are included in the section on rattles).

and very young children (Mart. 14.54; Lucr. 5.228; Quint. *Inst.* 9.4.66). Similar in shape and size are whistles in the shape of tiny birds; one particularly delightful find of five terracotta chickens from Compiègne is now in the Musée des Antiquités Nationales de St-Germain-en-Laye.⁸ Like many toys, such items might continue to amuse older children but be played with in different ways. Some toys, however, are designed for particular age stages. Quintilian suggests that ivory letters be played with as the first stage of learning to read and write (Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.26).⁹

Sculptors use the motif of playing with nuts, knucklebones, and balls to encapsulate the idea of childhood (Figure 16.2). Several sets of knucklebones survive; some are literally the knucklebones of sheep or pigs, whereas others were made of far more precious material such as ivory (Mart. 14.14; Seneca *De Constantia* 12.2).¹⁰ Similarly, nuts would have been easy to find and play with, but terracotta models of nuts have also been found; a young woman from Vetralla was found buried with one carved from rock crystal.¹¹



FIGURE 16.2 A terracotta group of young women playing knucklebones. Campania ca. 330–300 BCE. (Courtesy British Museum.)

⁸ Coulon 1994/2004: 80; Ricotta 1995: 25; Durand 1991a: 50–3 (with images).

⁹ Jerome uses Quintilian's advice in his late fourth-century letter (128.4) on how to raise a little girl to a life of asceticism.

¹⁰ Poplin 1992, May 1991: 100–5, 108–9 (with images).

¹¹ Bordenache Battaglia 1983: 71; Shumka 1993: 98, cat. no. 51.

This last example is far more likely to belong to the category of ritual object (*crepundia*) than toy, but the fact that it is in the form of a plaything is worth noting. Literary and iconographic evidence suggests that both boys and girls enjoyed playing with these easily available objects. A sarcophagus dating to the third century CE and now in the Vatican Chiaramonti Museum (inv. no. 1304) has a relief on its front face showing young girls playing with nuts in one third of the space and boys playing and fighting in the rest of the space. The girls play beneath a canopy or curtain, perhaps suggesting they are inside, while the boys' play is far less constrained and more vibrant.¹² Martial, Horace, and Persius all describe playing and gambling with nuts (Mart. 14.19 [18]; Hor. Sat. 2.3.171–4; Pers. 1.10)—a habit that could last into adult life.

Children also played with small figures, animals, and wheeled horses, carts, and mounted soldiers. Tiny copies of birds and animals made in terracotta or plaster are common, as are little figures mounted on horses made with a hole in the legs through which a wooden spindle could be threaded and wheels mounted on each side, allowing the figure to be rolled across the floor (Figure 16.3).¹³ Little lead figures like the horse and rider shown here have also been found (Figure 16.4).

Balls were also part of the ancient toybox. As might be imagined, they came in all sizes and weights: colored wool balls, linen, and reed balls (Figure 16.5); and leather skins stuffed with either feathers (*paganica*: Mart. 14.45) or air (*follis*, *folliculis*: Mart. 12.82, 14.47) or that were small and very hard (*trigonalis*: Mart. 14.46). Playing with balls is recommended as good exercise for all ages (Galen *De San.* 8.1; Mart. 14.47). Balls rarely



FIGURE 16.3 Painted wooden wheeled horse from Roman Egypt. H. 7.6 cm, L. 11 cm. (Courtesy British Museum.)

¹² Huskinson 1996: 17, cat. no. 1.37.

¹³ Coulon 1994/2004: 108–9 (with images); Ricotti 1995: 25–9 (with images); Rouvier-Jeanline 1991: 64–73 (with images).



FIGURE 16.4 Small lead figure of a horse and rider. H. 4.318 cm. Roman, 1st–3rd century CE. (Courtesy British Museum.)



FIGURE 16.5 Small hollow balls made of linen and decorated with reeds. These have stone chips inside so could also have served as rattles and probably as ritual objects. Roman Egypt. (Courtesy British Museum.)

survive in the archeological record, but many representations of children of all ages show them holding or playing with balls. A relief in the Louvre (inv. no. 120) from the mid-second century CE shows three girls following each other, one holding a ball and another throwing one in the air. At the other end of the same panel, a group of four boys is playing a game that involves rolling the balls down a board. A similar scene is

illustrated on a sarcophagus in the Museo Nazionale, Rome (inv. no. 67612), which shows three chubby *erotes* playing with what looks like a push-along wheel. Mirroring them on the other side of the central inscription are four little figures who play at rolling circular objects with holes in the middle (not unlike loom weights) down a board.¹⁴

In this category of more active play we might also include hoops and push/pull-along carts. Hoops are mentioned by Ovid (*Ars Am.* 3.381), Horace (as something Greek, *Odes* 3.24.57), Martial (14.168, who suggests his gift is a wheel), and Propertius (3.14, a Spartan reference), but they rarely occur in iconography and not at all, as far as I am aware, in the archeological record.¹⁵ Carts and pretend chariots are known from iconography showing children using the ancient equivalent of the baby-walker and riding in vehicles pulled by animals. On an early second century sarcophagus from the Museo Nazionale Romano collection (inv. no. 65199), a small, chubby, naked child is shown learning to walk by pushing a small cart. More popular are images such as the famous relief on the mid-second century biographical sarcophagus of Cornelius Statius in the Louvre (inv. no. MA659), which encapsulates a stage of childhood in an image of a little boy standing in a small pretend chariot pulled by a ram. (See Larsson Lovén in this volume for scenes of children's play on sarcophagi).¹⁶

Spinning tops also seem to have been common playthings. There are small boxwood examples of these that were clearly made to be spun by hand, with a conical pivot on the underside and a slightly raised center on the top for gripping.¹⁷ Others seem to have been made for whipping, like the one Vergil describes flying back and forth under the whip in front of a group of amazed boys (*Aen.* 7.376–87).¹⁸

DOLLS

Dolls are probably the most well-documented “toys” of antiquity.¹⁹ They have a fascination for modern authors that other toys seem not to have and have been far more discussed in modern scholarship than any other plaything and almost any other grave good

¹⁴ For more on balls see Shumka 1993: 120–3, cat. nos. 1–6. For images see Ricotti 1995: 29; Durand 1991b: 92–100 (with images).

¹⁵ Shumka 1993: 123–5, cat. nos. 54, 55 has only the four literary references and two iconographic examples, one of which, the mosaic from Istanbul, is unclear. For illustrations of hoops in Greek vase paintings see Ricotti 1995: 33 and the chapter by Oakley in this volume.

¹⁶ See Huskinson 1996: 14–5, pls. 1.3, 2.1, her cat. nos. 1.23, 1.29.

¹⁷ Coulon 1994/2004: 84.

¹⁸ The progress of the top is a simile for the furor of Amata; these lines are also rather overused as one of the two examples of children actually being placed within the confines (here the *atrium*) of a house (the other is Lucr. 4.400).

¹⁹ Elderkin 1930: 455–79; Rinaldi 1956; Manson 1987, 1991, 1992; Rossi 1993; Shumka 1993: 128–34; Coulon 1994/2004: 95–101; Ricotti 1995: 51–62; Janssen 1996; Shumka 1999; Martin-Kilcher 2000; Dasen 2003.

commonly found in child burials, with the exception of weapons.²⁰ Dolls as tiny human (usually female) figures survive in great numbers from antiquity. In 1987 Michel Manson had recorded 493 and recent discoveries have probably upped this figure to just over 500.²¹ Manson defines a play doll as being any figurine that could be identified as not coming from an exclusively cultic or religious context, was of a size and weight that could be manipulated by a child, and whose structure and articulation would allow the illusion of real life in play.²²

Most surviving Roman dolls are made of cloth, wood, terracotta, bone, or ivory (Figure 16.6).²³ The most frequently illustrated and discussed are those that date from the mid-second to early fourth century, all found in female (and for the most part young female) funerary contexts. The burial environment, the workmanship, and accoutrements of these dolls suggest that they belonged to girls or young women of the upper classes.²⁴ The dolls were all found without clothes, although some have jewelry attached. All reproduce the body type of young or mature women rather than babies. They share, to varying degrees, small but clearly shaped breasts (some with defined nipples), wide



FIGURE 16.6 Rag doll from Roman Egypt, made of linen and stuffed with rags and papyrus. (Courtesy British Museum.)

²⁰ Sofaer Derevenski 2000: 6–10 and her references for the problems of interpreting weapon deposits.

²¹ Manson 1987: 19; Dolansky 2012: 257, n. 2 lists a number of new finds.

²² Manson 1987: 15.

²³ On rag dolls from Roman Egypt dating from first to fourth centuries CE see Janssen 1996.

²⁴ There is a potential problem with the evidence here. As noted in note 4, it is impossible to sex a skeleton under the age of about twelve. In the past dolls, especially female figurines, have been used to assume the grave is one of a female child when this might not be the case. Most of those dealt with here come from a context where the skeleton has been sexed, or an inscription identifies the deceased. The sample in Dolansky 2012 includes a wider range, and her article deals essentially with dolls as girls' toys.

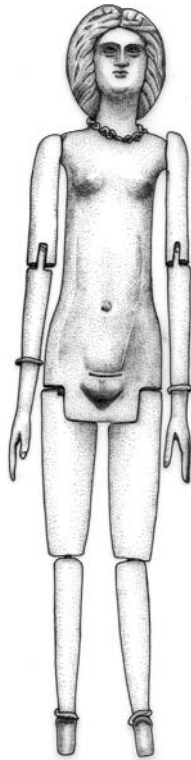


FIGURE 16.7 Ivory doll from Via Valeria, Tivoli. Dated to late 2nd century CE by Julia Domna hairstyle. (Drawing J. Willmott; reproduced with permission of the University of Sheffield.)

hips, slightly protruding bellies (some with clearly delineated navels) and buttocks, and carefully marked-out pubic triangles (Figure 16.7). Their arms are jointed at the shoulder and elbow and their legs at the hips and knees, thus allowing for a wide range of potential movement. Unfortunately, I have never seen one of these dolls outside of a museum case so I have no idea how loose or stiff the joints might have been in antiquity or whether the dolls could hold a pose or were more like puppets and needed to be held in position. On some of them the facial features and hairstyles are very skillfully and carefully carved. Traditionally the dolls have been dated, like female sculpture, by the imitation of their hairstyles to imperial models. Those that survive intact range from 15 to 24 centimeters in height. They have been found across the western empire. The fact that these are not baby or even child dolls means they have been viewed not only as preparing young girls for their future role as a wife²⁵ but also as inculcating ideas of sexual identity rather than maternity.²⁶

²⁵ Wiedemann 1989: 149.

²⁶ Shumka 1993: 168–9.

When dealing with rag dolls that could more easily be imagined as babies, Janssen (1996) also took the view that the dolls could be seen as playing a part in preparation for the future role as mother.²⁷ Some of the dolls have been found with small items such as miniature furniture or toilet implements that have been identified as doll accessories.²⁸ Dolls' clothes and a woolen ball for a doll, dating to the fourth century CE, were found at Behnasa in the late nineteenth century.²⁹ As with clothing for adults, the dry conditions of Egypt have allowed the preservation of the doll and the clothes. Unfortunately the articulated dolls have not been found with clothes, but literary evidence suggests that they were dressed (*Anth. Pal.* 6.280). This is the single reference to dolls' dresses, and the *Palatine Anthology* is difficult to date. The nudity of the dolls has not often been remarked upon, presumably because of the assumption that they were originally dressed. Janssen comments that "naked dolls are appealing to little girls as they could dress them themselves" (p. 239). However, the detail on the bodies of the articulated dolls, in not only shape but also the defined nipples, navels, and pubic triangles, deserves more attention. Not all dolls are female shaped, however. An enigmatic little torso of a Roman soldier was found in the grave of ten-year-old Claudia Victoria in Lyon. This has holes at the shoulders suggesting that it too could have been articulated.³⁰ This find also reminds us not to use dolls to assume the gender of the deceased. The quality of some of the articulated dolls both in terms of material and craftsmanship suggests that they probably belonged to the wealthier classes, but it must be remembered that it is imagination that makes a doll more than just an inanimate object. Dolls can be created from almost any material: a wooden spoon with a face drawn on it or straw bound and tied to resemble a human figure.

In recent research Fanny Dolansky (2012) worked with a sample of eighteen well-preserved, articulated dolls, including cloth dolls, ranging from the early second to mid-fourth centuries CE. Until Dolansky's article, the role such dolls played in inculcating social norms had been relatively unproblematicized, but still dolls have rarely been considered as simply toys or even as items of special affection for the deceased. The fact that they form part of the grave goods of girls and young women has led to a series of readings: (1) that the dolls might mark out girls who died before fulfilling their potential as mothers;³¹ (2) that the dolls signify the unmarried status of these girls and are a symbol of the ritual wherein girls laid aside their dolls before their wedding day;³² or (3) that they have some hitherto unknown religious meaning.³³

²⁷ Janssen 1993: 239.

²⁸ Shumka 1993: 91–4, cat. nos. 31–40. For a tiny silver table service from the "Tomb of a Girl" near Rome, see Martin-Kilcher 2000: 69.

²⁹ Janssen 1993: 237–9. She also shows an illustration of doll's clothing from Qasr Ibrim dating from the Ottoman period.

³⁰ Shumka 1993: 131, cat. no. 18; Claudia Victoria: *CIL* 13.2108.

³¹ Rapinesi 2004: 39.

³² Martin-Kilcher 2000; Harlow 2012c: 154–6. On prenuptial rituals and dedication of dolls and toys see Hersch 2010: 66–8; Harlow and Laurence 2002: 67–72; Dolansky 2008: 47–70.

³³ Chioffi 1998: 28; Martin-Kilcher 2000; Denzey 2007: 4 (following Lanciani 1892: 268).

Dolansky (2012) made a far more complex case for the role played by dolls in the inculcation of gender and status ideologies by focusing on their potential for movement, their adornment in the form of attached or painted jewelry, and their likeness to imperial models.³⁴ She placed the dolls with carefully carved hair and additional jewelry into the Roman debate on *cultus*. The notion and practice of *cultus* is a locus of contention among Roman authors, but the material culture associated with Roman women presents a far more positive image than the literature suggests.³⁵ Upper-class Roman women were required to cultivate a look that would make them attractive partners for their husbands to display. This involved the right clothes, having the correctly arranged hair, a properly made-up face, and adornment of just the right amount of jewelry.

Latin authors make it impossible for women to get the balance between excess and moderation right: the weak female mind, seduced by expensive jewelry and exotic textiles, is a literary commonplace. The meretricious nature of cosmetics and wigs was a fundamental trope in almost all genres of literature. Moralists, satirists, elegists, and historians alike all played with this idea to suit their own ends. On the other hand, the material culture of women's lives is often displayed as made up entirely of the cosmetic pots, jewelry, hairpins, tweezers, spatulas, and other implements required to engage fully with the management of *cultus*. In fact, women were so proud of this self-fashioning that it became part of their self-representation in death, on tombstones, and in grave assemblages.³⁶ Dolansky (2012) argued that young girls, especially as they reached marriageable age, had to learn to negotiate the tightrope of the problem of personal adornment.³⁷ In the graves of at least two of the girls who were buried with their dolls, miniature toilet implements and accoutrements were also found. If these can be argued to form part of their toy box in life, then there is an unambiguous message about learning to use the tools of *cultus*, either on themselves or on their dolls.

Dolansky (2012) reprised current notions of how the articulation of the dolls might lead to certain types of play: imitating the life of the child or those of adults she observed being dressed and adorned; or learning decorum and body language. Refreshingly, Dolansky pushed the potential of articulation further by using ethnographic studies of modern girls interacting with their Barbie dolls as a springboard to present ways a child might be more active herself in choosing the roles her doll might play. Barbie dolls come with dozens of manufacturer-sanctioned personae that plenty of girls extend to fit their own environments or subvert to create Barbie types of their own making. In modern research and society Barbie has become a rather complex figure. She has been seen as a role model (and body shape) to despise and reject, while at the same time she is continually remade, often in role models that those who denigrate her would want girls to aspire to or that might sit outside or beyond the social expectations of the players and

³⁴ Dolansky 2012: 259.

³⁵ Richlin 1995; d'Ambra 2007: 111–27; Shumka 2008; Harlow 2012a; Swift 2012.

³⁶ Shumka 2008; Swift 2012.

³⁷ Dolansky 2012: 274–5.

their families. Dolls can both constrain and set free the imagination. Dolansky posited that the articulation of the dolls might have allowed little Roman girls to create a play world that took them outside their safe family environment.³⁸ This seems to be a justifiable hypothesis, that a creative young girl could imagine the doll into the exoticism of the streets and the theaters and perhaps, given that most of these dolls looked like empresses, to an imagined imperial palace. Indeed, since most of these dolls would have belonged to upper class owners, a little girl might use the world of her father and brothers and imagine her dolls in the forum, the law courts, and the senate house. The same child, as Dolansky said, could at other times play at domesticity and dressing up and use the doll to practice the arts of *cultus*.

Dolansky's (2012) final point was that the dolls, by virtue of their hairstyles, could be associated with empresses. She made a case that there are those with a resemblance to Faustina the Elder and Younger and presented a thesis that these dolls in particular became by association part of the symbolism of the imperial ideologies promoted by the empresses and their husbands. These ideologies, especially through the establishment of *alimenta* programs (on which see McGinn in this volume), stressed ideals of fertility, prosperity, and generosity and the concomitant virtues of the good wife and mother. The dolls, by association, became complex symbols, and their owners, while recognizing that they could never attain the positions and potential for euergetism expressed by empresses, might yet consider the virtues of good *matronae* while at the same time might "play with power and question established gender roles."³⁹

A TINY PROBLEM: THE CASE OF MINIATURES

I have spent some time on Dolansky's (2012) reading of dolls as she made the multiple functions of inanimate objects clear; this returns me to the original question: when is a toy not a toy? While dolls may have complex interpretive baggage, finds of small items or miniatures are particularly problematic when dealing with the material culture of children.⁴⁰ Miniatures survive in a range of materials from clay, tin, amber, and rock crystal to silver and gold and replicate all manner of things from household furniture to tiny animals and fabulous creatures. Particular kinds of miniatures, such as stamped pottery items known as *sigillaria*, were given as presents at the *Saturnalia* (Aul. Gell. 2.3.5; Sen. *Ep.* 12.3.5); the rattle shown in Figure 16.1 may also be classified as one of these

³⁸ Ibid.: 278–81 (with bibliography).

³⁹ Ibid.: 288. I find this point harder to process: I can understand the association with empresses and conscious (and unconscious) links with imperially presented virtues; however, while the point is undoubtedly well argued, I am not yet convinced that this would be the impetus behind any questioning of gender roles.

⁴⁰ The problem of miniatures is also stressed by Sofaer Derevenski 2000: 7 (with bibliography).

sigillaria. Small objects, and sometimes the material they were made from, also came to have a number of amuletic, religious, and cultic associations. Consequently, in the surviving material culture, it is often hard to decipher which, if any, association should be dominant. Small charms or amulets were frequently carried or worn on a string around the neck by all classes of people in the Roman world. These items, which often also made a noise by jangling together, were known as *crepundia*. In Plautus's *Rudens*, a long-lost daughter is recognized by such *crepundia*: Palaestra's box contained a miniature gold sword inscribed with the name of her father, a two-edged ax of gold with the name of her mother, a little silver knife, two little hands linked together, a little sow and a golden *bulla*,⁴¹ given to her on her birthday (*Rudens* 4.4. 1151–9). Small items are, of course, very attractive for small hands, and toys made especially for children are small for a reason. However, amulets are also small, so there is a conundrum here for the modern viewer: when are *crepundia* toys? This is an equally vexing issue whether the item is found in a secure burial context or a particularly religious or cultic one, as toys were also dedicated at sanctuaries and played a part in some rites.⁴² A baby with a string of charms around his or her neck would presumably play with them, regardless of their amuletic associations, and I am tempted to say a *bulla* would also distract a baby, especially one that was suckable!

Numerous small artifacts survive from across the Roman Empire, but even in child graves some objects retain an ambiguity and multiplicity of function. We cannot simply assume that miniatures are toys or, conversely, that they have solely cultic connotations.⁴³ In the tomb of fifteen-year-old Julia Graphide from Brescello, a collection of tiny tin domestic objects (ranging between 2 and 4 centimeters high) was found; it consisted of a set of plates, drinking vessels, and tiny furniture. These have been interpreted variously as the playthings of the child when alive or as toys for dolls or a sign of parental grief and loss: a child's favorite toys buried with her to keep her company in the afterlife or as *crepundia*.⁴⁴ The tiny objects would certainly suit small hands and encourage imaginative play, which would also inculcate traditional gender values. More recently Stefanie Martin-Kilcher (2000) argued that they should be seen only as *crepundia* and suggested that they were of too poor a quality for play and more likely to be votives that a young girl would dedicate to the gods before her wedding; their presence in the grave is a marker of the "unattained wedding."⁴⁵ This view means that the tiny

⁴¹ A *bulla* is an amulet given to freeborn children; this is a rare example of a girl possessing one. On *bullae*, see Larsson Lovén in this volume.

⁴² Cf. Manson 1975: 131–2; Martin-Kilcher 2000: 69; Lavaniouk 2007.

⁴³ For differing interpretations of miniature objects see Wardle and Wardle 2007 (Aegean) and Green in Going et al. 1997 (Roman Britain).

⁴⁴ Rinaldi 1956: 105–14. See Durand 1991c: 64–6 for images.

⁴⁵ Martin-Kilcher 2000: 69. This hypothesis fits with Martin-Kilcher's overall argument on the grave goods belonging to a group of young girls whose mode of commemoration suggests that they had died before being married. I think Martin-Kilcher overestimates the literary evidence on premarital rituals for girls, which is scanty and antiquarian; see Harlow and Laurence 2002: 67–72; Dolansky 2008: 47–70.

domestic objects serve to represent, like the dolls, a life not fully lived, a maturity never reached. Martin-Kilcher did, however, think that another miniature dinner service, this one of silver, found in the “Tomb of a Girl” was a “proper toy,” one that would have been dedicated to the gods on the night before the wedding but, unlike Julia Graphide’s collection, would have been played with in life. She argued that, because the tin set of Julia Graphide is too poorly made and tin has apotropaic powers, it is not a toy; the other silver set, however, is.⁴⁶

The interpretation of miniature objects is complex; however, it is worth asking how a child might have engaged with these items, and the answer might depend on the age of the child. Small-sized objects have a fascination for child and adult alike, and it is easy to imagine them being provided, especially by wealthier parents, for their children as play-things. In her catalog Shumka labels some of her selection of small objects as “doll accessories,” and it is not hard to make this link although the provenance of many of her items is unknown. Shumka’s collection includes a ladle, goblet, and four little amphorae of varying sizes as well as tiny lamps, a silver footstool, and candelabra all dating to around the first century CE.⁴⁷ Other examples could be added, for instance, a small dinner service of a dish and five drinking vessels of various shapes from Germania.⁴⁸

In the thirteen burials investigated by Martin-Kilcher (2000), eight were identified as containing miniature implements; of these, six contained amulets. She categorizes both amulets and miniatures as *crepundia*. These collective *crepundia* consist of the domestic objects of Julia Graphide; a number of amber miniatures from a young woman’s grave from Vetralla including a tiny caped figure (*cucullatus*), a model of a tortoise, a little rock crystal *skyphos* and other vases, and a tiny scallop shaped container for cosmetics alongside other objects of *mundus muliebris*;⁴⁹ toilet items from the tomb of Crepereia Tryphaena;⁵⁰ and amber shell-shaped pots, amber vases, and amber ladles from a tomb on the Via Cassia.⁵¹ From Gabriella Bordenache Battaglia’s collection of grave goods from the Museo Nazionale at Rome we could add a similar collection of miniature items: a little shell-shaped amber pot, a little amber cup with a handle, little amber ladle with a long handle, all found in the tomb of the mummified eight-year-old girl from Grottarossa (second half of second century CE), who also had an ivory doll;⁵² thirteen appliqué figures made of thin, translucent ivory from Ariccia (late first century CE).⁵³

⁴⁶ Martin-Kilcher 2000: 69. In editing this chapter, Judith Evans Grubbs suggested that it makes more sense to let a child play with a set made out of cheaper material rather than the more expensive silver one. Given that we know that Julia Graphide was the foster child of a freed couple, it may also be that the lead set was as good as they could afford.

⁴⁷ Shumka 1993: 91–4, cat. nos. 31–40.

⁴⁸ Römisches-Germanisches Museum de Cologne, in Coulon 1994/2004: 101.

⁴⁹ Bordenache Battaglia 1983: 51, 57.

⁵⁰ For Crepereia Tryphaena see Lanciani 1892; Chioffi 1998: 81–4; Martin-Kilcher 2000: 64, 69; Denzey 2007: 2–9; Harlow 2012c, and for images see Bertelli et al. 2008.

⁵¹ Bordenache Battaglia 1983: 118–21, 115–7 on the ivory doll also found in this tomb.

⁵² Ibid.: 118–23; for the mummification and death mask of this little girl see Chioffi 1998; Dasen 2010: 138–42.

⁵³ Bordenache Battaglia: 35–38.

and the small model of a boat made of cut glass and white ivory found with the cremated remains of Laetilia Gemella who died at age twelve (mid-first century CE).⁵⁴ The common link among many of these miniatures is that they are made of amber or rock crystal, both materials that had apotropaic powers in antiquity (Pliny *NH* 37.9, cited in Martin-Kilcher, p. 69). Close examination of the items to show wear might tell us if these were bought new to go in the grave or if, like those of Palaestra, they had been used in life. And if used in life, especially by small children, would these objects have played the role of toys, even of toys with special powers?

CONCLUSION

Artifacts defined as toys and playthings are part of the material culture of societies living in the Roman Empire. The toys I have dealt with here could conceivably have been used by a child. This does not exclude their use by adults, and many items that form part of a child's experience might also be used in adult life; however, the balls and dice that adults played with might not be considered toys in the same way.⁵⁵ For those who have read this volume thus far or who have some knowledge of Roman childhood, it requires a series of interpretive gymnastics to let the material evidence speak for itself. We tend to bring to the interpretation of material culture all that we know about a society and read it in ways that support those assumptions; an artifact per se generally takes a passive role in attempts to slot it into reconstructions of social behavior in the past. Artifacts defined as playthings or toys are no exception and, as we have seen, can often have multiple or ambiguous functions. But it seems apparent from all the evidence that Roman parents and society assumed that some children, at least, could and should have time to play.

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⁵⁴ Ibid.: 29. There is no external hint as to why this artifact was chosen to go in with the ashes. It has been variously interpreted as something that the child treasured, a reflection of her favorite activities, and something that would help her deal with the dangerous crossing to the underworld (Calvi 1974–75 cited in Bordenache Battaglia 1983: 29), or as having a symbolic meaning, as an allusion to the last journey to the underworld, particularly as traditional Roman gender roles would make the association of Laetilia Gemella with marine activities unlikely.

⁵⁵ For gaming in the forum see Trifilò 2011.

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CHAPTER 17

ROMAN CHILDREN AND THE LAW

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INTRODUCTION

ROMAN children were in general treated well under the law. This favorable situation of theirs only improved with the passage of time. My chapter documents this phenomenon and attempts to explain it. Briefly put, I argue that, while the law always favored children, in the wake of the Augustan laws on marriage, the *lex Iulia et Papia*, this principle was considerably reinforced in many areas affecting children, not just those directly addressed by this statute. The obvious challenge to this thesis is that it is frankly impossible to be certain that a number of the changes I describe would not have occurred anyway, without the Augustan legislation. Nevertheless, the overall trend is so striking that the explanation I propose retains, I think, a high degree of plausibility. Whatever one chooses to argue for their position in social life, it is clear that children were not marginal to the concerns of the Roman legal authorities.

One thing to emphasize at the start is that it is not all that obvious that the law should have favored children. While recent research has demonstrated that Roman society was no paradise for seniors,¹ this was hardly, by modern standards, a youth culture. The ultimate explanation for the trend favoring children must, I believe, be sought in demography and the moral reception of this reality by the Roman elite. High mortality rates for both adults and especially for very young children meant first that the survival of the latter could not be taken for granted and second that those who did survive were likely to be rendered half (meaning in most cases fatherless) or even full orphans at a relatively young age.²

This chapter deals with the central period of Roman law, ranging from ca. 100 BCE to ca. 250 CE. It considers only Roman citizens, so not slave children, for example. For

¹ See above all Cokayne 2003; Parkin 2003.

² For a recent discussion, see Scheidel 2007: esp. 38–42.

sheer reasons of space the treatment is extremely summary and selective in nature. The focus is on relatively young children. This means that for the most part our concern is with prepubescent children (*impuberes*), who were minors at law until they reached the legally defined age of puberty or majority, meaning twelve for females and ca. fourteen for males.³

EMPERORS, JURISTS, AND THE *LEX IULIA ET PAPIA*

The reign of Augustus saw the passage of two marriage laws, the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* of 18 BCE and the *lex Papia Poppaea* of 9 CE, which supplemented and partly recast the first. The statutes encouraged marriage and the raising of children for moral and demographic ends through the institution of a regime of rewards and penalties, the most important of which were testamentary in nature. They created two new privileged statuses—married persons and an even loftier category of married with children—while defining for each of these a corresponding underprivileged status, namely, *caelibes* and *orbi*. Another feature was to create a double series of marriage prohibitions in the context of which the *ordo senatorius* came to be defined for the first time at law. Ancient and modern commentators tend as a point of convenience to treat the two laws as one, referring to them through a composite title, such as *lex Iulia et Papia*.⁴

The reception of the Augustan marriage legislation by subsequent emperors has been fairly well studied, so that it is possible to say here simply that its goals received broad support over time, though of course some emperors were more supportive than others.⁵ As for the jurists, we have an unusual, and highly important, programmatic statement from the second-century jurist Terentius Clemens: "...the statute was enacted for the common good, namely, to promote the procreation of children, [and so] is to be furthered through interpretation."⁶

³ On this differential (and, for males, somewhat complicated) age of puberty/majority at law, see Frier and McGinn 2004: 23–24. As we shall see, minors without a *paterfamilias*, meaning a living male ascendant who had them in his *patria potestas*, were granted, as wards (*pupilli/ae*), particular protection under the law, above all in the form of the assistance of guardians called *tutores*. Minors should not be confused with young adults, meaning those past puberty/majority but younger (*minores*) than twenty-five, who enjoyed certain legal protections of their own, but are not our concern here: see Frier and McGinn 2004: 438–44.

⁴ The bibliography is vast. See McGinn 1998 for the older literature and for a more recent discussion McGinn 2008: 15–18.

⁵ See McGinn 1998: ch. 4; McGinn 2008.

⁶ Ter. Clem. (5 *ad legem Iuliam et Papiam*) Dig. 35.1.64.1: "...legem enim utilem rei publicae, subolis scilicet procreandae causa latam, adiuvandam interpretatione." Astolfi 1996: 165 argues that the words in question derive from Julian. On Julian, see Kunkel 1967: 157–66; on Clemens see *ibid.*: 177–81.

The logic is, I believe, obvious, and its implications are easily discerned in juristic discussions of the law itself, which take a consistently favorable stance in support of these goals without being quite as forthright as Clemens is about this. What matters for us is whether the position adopted by emperors and jurists with regard to the Augustan statute translated into favorable treatment of children in other areas of social policy and the law. This is relatively easy to demonstrate regarding various measures that were, I argue, taken pursuant to the *lex Iulia et Papia*, meaning that they favored children in a comparable manner. We examine the alimentary programs and the SCC *Tertullianum* and *Orfitianum*.

Alimenta

These are public foundations established by the imperial government and by private individuals to provide material support to children in the form of what some scholars have described as family allowances.⁷ The first attested example is from the Julio-Claudian period, a privately sponsored foundation designed to support the children of the central Italian town of Atina.⁸ Nerva likely, and Trajan certainly, instituted state-sponsored programs that continued under their successors at least until the early third century. Some fifty-five or so of these, at minimum, are attested for Italy.⁹ The public policy motives animating Trajan, the principal implementer if not the originator of the state-sponsored programs, are clear to read from the evidence, which includes his

⁷ To make a few preliminary points about the alimentary programs, the ancient evidence is relatively abundant, the modern literature is almost endless, and the lack of agreement among scholars on virtually every point of importance is impressive to say the least. I can offer only a summary treatment here. For a discussion of some of the main trends in the scholarship, see Carlsen 1999. On the question of whether Nerva or Trajan initiated the state-sponsored programs, see, for example, Eck 1979/1999: 151; Duncan-Jones 1982: 292; Sherwin-White 1985: 422; Griffin 2000: 93, 115–16; Pagé 2009; Cao 2010: 25–40. On whether the motive for their introduction was exclusively demographic or (also) supportive of Italian agriculture (as well as the balance of pragmatic and ideological factors), see, for example, Veyne 1976: 647–60; Eck 1979/1999: 151–52; Duncan-Jones 1982: 294–300; Patterson 1987: 124–33; Bossu 1989; Wierschowski 1999; Lo Cascio 2000: 226–30, 235, 238, 264, 271–76; González Román 2004: 188–202; Tamayo Errazquin 2010: 452–58. On the precise status of the recipients, see, for example, Duncan-Jones 1982: 300–303; Woolf 1990: 204–11; Wierschowski 1998; Lo Cascio 2000: 268–71; Jongman 2002: 62–69; Cao 2010: 267–89. These are by no means the only points at issue.

⁸ T. Helvius Basila left a foundation in the form of a legacy that supplied children with grain until (evidently) they reached puberty and then with a cash payout of HS 1,000 each: *ILS* 977 (mid-first century; Mitchell 1986: 20–7; Magioncalda 1994: 1–7; Cao 2010: 191–9; Mitchell and French 2012: 144–50). There is at least one other pre-Nervan example that served as a possible model for the emperors: Duncan-Jones 1982: 296–97. Such foundations were “public” as much as the imperial ones, especially when contrasted with the bequests of *alimenta* left to private individuals, a long-standing practice that may have served as a more distant inspiration for the imperial programs. On legal aspects, see Johnston 1985.

⁹ See Woolf 1990: 199, on the lists compiled by Duncan-Jones and Eck; Lo Cascio 2000: 282; Jongman 2002: 65–69. Cao 2010: 134–37 has an updated version. On state- and privately sponsored programs outside of Italy, see Jones 1989; Woolf 1990: 225–27.

coins, two important inscriptions recording the establishment of *alimenta* at the Italian towns of Veleia and Ligure Baebiani, Pliny's *Panegyricus*, and imperially sponsored sculptural representations, above all on his famous Arch at Beneventum.¹⁰ For the sake of economy, this discussion focuses on the latter two, the speech and the Arch.

The evidence of Pliny in the *Panegyricus*, the oration of thanksgiving he offered as consul in 100 CE, shows that Trajan made an important *congiarium*, or distribution of money, in the capital the previous year that included children as beneficiaries and instituted an alimentary program, also at Rome, that embraced just under five thousand children.¹¹ Pliny's language is important for our understanding of how the emperor's purpose was received by contemporaries: "while enormous rewards and comparable penalties motivate the wealthy to raise children, there is only one way to encourage those less well-off—a good emperor."¹² This is an obvious reference to the Augustan law and its limitations, contrasted with the more praiseworthy policies of the reigning emperor.¹³ Pliny goes on to amplify the point, asserting that the fate of the Empire and the *res publica* are at stake. If the emperor neglects the lower orders, the plebs, his concern for the upper classes, the *proceres*, is revealed as futile.¹⁴ While the context is strictly that of the *congiarium* and alimentary program at Rome, which is Pliny's focus throughout this speech,¹⁵ the ideological justification surely extends to all imperial alimentary programs. The logic, evidently shared by the emperor and others as well, is clear. Providing material assistance to children on this social level was thought to encourage prospective parents to raise them.

We can gain a more precise idea of what Trajan was attempting through a consideration of the sculptural program of the Arch at Beneventum.¹⁶ Like Pliny's speech, the arch emphasizes Trajan's role as father of his country (*Pater Patriae*).¹⁷ A connection with

¹⁰ For the coins, etc., see Woolf 1990: 222–23; Lo Cascio 2000: 265–67; Pavón Torrejón 2004. The inscriptions were found at Veleia (*ILS* 6675), near Placentia and at Ligure Baebiani (*ILS* 6509), near Beneventum.

¹¹ Pliny *Pan.* 25–28. See Duncan-Jones 1982: 290 on the alimentary program; Lamotte 2007: 189 on the *congiarium*. I view these, as well as the imperial *frumentationes*, as separate but related imperial initiatives, though there is a diversity of opinion among scholars on the nature of the relationship: see, for example, Abramenko 1990; Lo Cascio 2000: 227; Jongman 2002: 49–52.

¹² Pliny *Pan.* 26.5: "Locupletes ad tollendos liberos ingentia praemia et pares poenae cohortantur, pauperibus educandi una ratio est bonus princeps." Whatever view one takes of the precise status of the recipients, it is clear that Pliny refers to members of the subelite: see also the contrast he draws between *proceres* and *plebs neglecta* in what follows (6).

¹³ The law differed not only in terms of its effectiveness regarding the lower orders but also in the means it used, *poenae* as well as *praemia*, whereas the alimentary schemes deployed only the latter, a fact implicitly emphasized in the rhetoric of imperial inscriptions: see Woolf 1990: 222–25. The target group was therefore comprised of persons with insufficient property to be motivated by the provisions of the Augustan law.

¹⁴ Lyasse 2008: 338–40 points out that Pliny mentions Augustus explicitly only twice, and in a relatively trivial manner. The indirect references are of course far more important: see also *Pan.* 37–40 on Trajan's improvements to another Augustan law that introduced a tax on inheritances.

¹⁵ Duncan-Jones 1982: 293.

¹⁶ For what follows, which can be only a cursory treatment, see the fine discussion in Currie 1996.

¹⁷ By now this was a fairly standard imperial title, but that a strong connection with Augustus still existed is suggested by *HA Hadr.* 6.4.

Augustus is made more explicit through the depiction of children, which is reminiscent of Augustan iconography as represented above all on the Altar of Peace, and through reference to several imperial initiatives designed as elements of a program encouraging growth and prosperity, including, of course, the *alimenta*. One can argue for a difference in that the Augustan monument sees these benefits as flowing from peace while the Trajanic views them as deriving from war and military conquest. But the use of representations of children to suggest a moral and demographic renewal that looks backward and forward at the same time is very similar. Trajan clearly wishes to invoke the policy of his distinguished predecessor.

The main idea behind the state-sponsored alimentary measures was, as part of a more general appeal to the example and authority of the first emperor, to pursue the demographic and moral goals of the *lex Iulia et Papia* in a more effective manner by offering explicitly material support that extended to some lower levels of society.¹⁸ The Augustan law itself was clearly designed to embrace at least some elements of the lower orders, but it does seem that its most effective incentives, both positive and negative, such as those governing testamentary dispositions, were aimed at, or had sense exclusively for, members of the elite.¹⁹

Not only alimentary programs sponsored by the state but also some established by private individuals are attested in the years that follow.²⁰ Pliny himself famously established one for his hometown of Comum.²¹ If Nerva was in fact the originator of the state-sponsored programs, then Pliny and other benefactors were evidently influenced by that emperor's exhortation to follow his example *ad munificentiam*.²² Trajan and his successors no doubt provided their own impetus to private giving, at minimum through setting an example. So we have numerous attestations of second-century foundations in Italy and elsewhere in the Roman world. There are some differences in the qualifications laid down for the recipients and the design of the programs in other respects²³ but

¹⁸ A minor, but telling detail—Augustus had included young children in at least one *congiarium* (Suet. *Aug.* 41.2) as did Trajan (Plin. *Pan.* 26.5-7); Wierschowski 1998: 773; Lamotte 2007: 197-98.

¹⁹ Augustus and his more immediate successors did provide direct material support for demographic purposes and not exclusively to members of the elite: see McGinn 1998: 111; McGinn 2008: 13.

²⁰ Later imperial foundations guarantee their ideological importance, at minimum, but it is persuasive to read them as testimony of more concrete success: see Duncan-Jones 1982: 319; Lo Cascio 2000: 230, 263; Cao 2010: 295-96 (but see 304-305).

²¹ Pliny *Ep.* 1.8; 7.18; *ILS* 2927. See Duncan-Jones 1982: 292.

²² Pliny *Ep.* 10.8.1.

²³ With regard to the age-range for eligibility for the private programs, which it was up to the benefactor to determine, modern scholars tend to assume that in most cases this began at birth, apart from one instance where it is given as three years. Greater variation emerges for the upper age-limits, though in principle the onset of puberty evidently served this purpose, if often on a more generous interpretation than that suggested by the law (see the Introduction to this chapter). Similarly, a ruling by Hadrian confirmed by Caracalla appears to have established fourteen years for females and eighteen for males as the upper limits for the state-sponsored programs, which Ulpian suggests applying to privately sponsored ones where the benefactor has not specified an age but referred to the onset of puberty (*usque in pubertatem*): Ulp. (2 *fideicomm.*) *Dig.* 34.1.14.1. Eligibility for the state-sponsored programs is commonly assumed to have begun for both sexes either at birth or at three years of age, by analogy with the privately sponsored ones. See the useful discussion in Magioncalda (1995).

nothing to detract from an overall unity of moral and demographic purpose such as already described.²⁴

In sum, we have a series of programs both public and private in origin that directly provided material support to children (and, arguably, their families) across a broad sector of the population, especially on its lower levels. It seems that the state took its cue from earlier legislation regarding the policy pursued and from the practice of private individuals as far as the method was concerned. We might reasonably suppose that the latter had been inspired in turn by that same legislation on the level of ideology. By the second century at the latest a broad social consensus emerges in favor of providing material support to children that resonates, as we shall see, in various areas of Roman private law.

Senatusconsultum Tertullianum

This statute, passed under Hadrian, improved, under certain conditions, a mother's intestate succession to her own children.²⁵ Previously she had, under the *ius civile*, no claim. The praetor had admitted her among heirs of the third grade, the *cognati*, but she was outranked by her children's agnatic relatives, who qualified in the second grade as "statutory heirs" or *legitimi*. The *senatusconsultum* (SC) granted her enhanced standing under the civil law, so that she was now promoted to that second grade in the praetorian system, among the *legitimi*, meaning ahead of the *cognati*. Only women with the *ius liberorum* were eligible, and they had to be widowed to receive the benefit.²⁶

The SC *Tertullianum* has been convincingly explained as an effort to keep property within a child's family of origin and prevent its dispersal either among more distant relatives (favored under both the civil and praetorian rules of succession) or to a patron (if the woman were freed). The ultimate end was not so much as to benefit the woman herself as to preserve the property for her surviving children, to whom the decedent child's estate—it was assumed—would pass when she died. One sign of this as the true concern is that, if the decedent child himself had children (meaning *sui heredes* or *liberi* in the two sets of classifications), they excluded the mother. Another is the rationale for the criterion of the *ius liberorum*, which was not just honorific (in the sense of rewarding a woman for producing so many children) but also designed to heighten the chances that surviving children would succeed to the mother. In essence, she was granted a life interest in an estate that had originally belonged to her decedent husband and that she was expected to transmit to her surviving children together with her own property upon her death.

²⁴ Significant are the instances in which publicly and privately sponsored programs existed together in the same town: Mrozek 1973.

²⁵ The standard discussion is Meinhart 1967. Also important is Gardner 1998: 209–67. Meinhart 1966 defends the Hadrianic date. For further references see McGinn 1998: 109–13, upon which this brief account depends, and the following notes. Here, as with the SC *Orfitianum*, the age of the "child" is irrelevant.

²⁶ Children dying *in potestate* had no property for others to inherit, while in the case of decedent *emancipati* fathers were preferred to mothers: see *Tit. Ulp.* 26.8, with McGinn 1998: 111.

The SC is a statute that is in important ways obviously pursuant to the *lex Iulia et Papia* but that takes a new direction as well. It borrows an important criterion of eligibility of the *ius liberorum* from the Augustan law, defining this in precisely the same way, meaning that three children qualified a freeborn woman while four did so for a freedwoman.²⁷ Like its predecessor it deals with benefits upon succession, though with the important difference that while the Augustan legislation dealt only with succession under a will the SC addresses intestate succession. This suggests a concern with providing material support for children below the level of the elite, but not too far below—in other words, at a level of society where there was some property to transmit—so it was not aimed at the utterly indigent. Presumably there was some overlap with the elements of society targeted by the contemporary alimentary programs. In fact, the SC *Tertullianum* appears not so much to seek to reconcile the goals of these programs with those of the Augustan marriage law, which as we have seen were already consonant with each other, but to broaden the means employed to pursue these same goals.

This argument seems borne out by an important development that took place in the wake of the passage of the SC. The jurists before long extended the privilege to mothers with illegitimate children.²⁸ It is not as if illegitimacy and intestacy were utterly unknown among the upper classes, but their incidence no doubt increased as one moved down the social scale. The intention of Hadrian and the jurists was that the material support contemplated by the law benefit children along as broad a social spectrum as possible. This was true to the extent that even mothers who were prostitutes were allowed to qualify for the benefit established by the SC.²⁹

Senatusconsultum Orfitianum

This statute, passed in 178 CE under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, built on the logic of the SC *Tertullianum*. It granted a woman's children preference, under the civil law, in terms of intestate succession to her estate. The SC accomplished this by raising them from the third praetorian class (*unde cognati*) to the second (*unde legitimi*), just as its predecessor did for mothers, but on a far more generous basis, ranking them above all members of her family, including her brothers, sisters, and other agnates. So, for example, if a woman died intestate and was survived by a brother and a daughter, the brother (as nearest agnate) took the entire estate before the passage of the SC *Orfitianum*, and her daughter took the entire estate after it. The mother did not have to possess the *ius liberorum*, for obvious reasons.

²⁷ *Sent. Paul.* 4.9.1, 7.

²⁸ *Iul.-Ulp. Dig.* 38.17.2.1 (Ulpian credits Julian with this move). Meinhart 1967: 40–41, 47 unpersuasively dates the change later; cf. Gardner 1998: 256–57. Illegitimate children were supported by the imperial alimentary foundation at Veleia, although in relatively small numbers. See Cao 2010: 273.

²⁹ *Ulp. Dig.* 38.17.2.4, with McGinn 1998: 109–13.

The more liberal disposition of this SC illuminates the purpose behind it and its predecessor, that of providing material support to as many children as possible across different social levels. Just as freedwomen received the benefit under the SC *Tertullianum*, their children were eligible under its successor, and the jurists here too extended eligibility to cases of illegitimacy.³⁰ Modestinus observes that all children are eligible for a mother's estate, even if they are the product of different marriages, and Paul adds that even a child not *sui iuris*, that is, in someone's *potestas*, is eligible.³¹ So the child—ideally—benefits even if a father survives the mother, “ideally” in the sense that the father was expected to transmit the property in question to the child upon his own death. Once again a benefit to a child is implicated in a benefit to a parent. One is struck by the general irrelevance of *patria potestas* (and *manus*) under this statute.

To the factors of intestacy, illegitimacy, and freed status as possible indicators of an intended reach below the level of the elite, all of which this SC had in common with its predecessor, at least as both statutes were understood by the jurists, we may add a peculiar feature of the SC *Orfitianum*. The law excluded as beneficiaries those who had hired out their services to fight wild beasts and those who had been condemned on a capital charge.³² The exclusion of the beast-fighter was perhaps accompanied by the exclusion of other professional types as well, such as prostitutes and pimps.³³ Ulpian shows that the prohibition was relaxed, evidently by imperial intervention, but its original inclusion in the statute suggests a wide social spectrum had in fact been contemplated as its target.

THE *EDICTUM CARBONIANUM* AND SIMILAR MEASURES

Aggressive assertion of the material interests of children at law as a matter of public policy was not limited to measures that can be defined as pursuant to the *lex Iulia et Papia*. That the jurists could and did take such a broad approach is shown by the following comment of the second-century jurist Pomponius on the interest of the community as a whole in dowries: “The legal institution of the dowry is always and everywhere of the greatest importance. For it is in the public interest that dowries be preserved for women, since for the procreation of offspring and the replenishment of the community with children it is emphatically necessary that women have dowries.”³⁴ The important point

³⁰ Ulp. *Dig.* 38.17.1 pr. 2.

³¹ Mod. *Dig.* 38.17.4; Paul. *Dig.* 38.17.6 pr.

³² Ulp. *Dig.* 38.17.1.6.

³³ McGinn 1998: 111.

³⁴ Pomp. (15 *ad Sabinum*) *Dig.* 24.3.1: “Dotium causa semper et ubique praecipua est: nam et publice interest dotes mulieribus conservari, cum dotatas esse feminas ad subolem procreandam replendamque liberis civitatem maxime sit necessarium.” See also Paul. *Dig.* 23.3.2.

is that the jurist does not cite the Augustan statute itself but the public policy that this advanced.³⁵

My argument, again, is that while the favorable treatment of children predates the law, this approach received in its wake an important validation whose effects we can trace on the level of policymaking. A good example is the *Edictum Carbonianum*, in part because this is strictly undatable. Most scholars assign this provision of the praetor's edict to the late Republic on speculative grounds, while the datable evidence we have for its elaboration, beginning with a reference to the Augustan jurist Labeo, comes after the passage of at least the first Augustan marriage law.³⁶ Rather than tendentiously dating the provision to this period, I think it better to leave the question open.

The *Edictum Carbonianum* granted a particularly defined mode of *bonorum possessio* (under any of the three basic categories, meaning *contra tabulas*, *sine tabulis*, and even, though perhaps not from the start, *secundum tabulas*) to a minor whose claim to rank among the *liberi* (as defined by this measure) of a decedent *paterfamilias* was impugned and who had not been validly disinherited.³⁷ This grant of *bonorum possessio* was designed to safeguard the property in question against dissipation, to provide material support for the child, and to avoid prejudice to the latter's pursuit of his or her interests at law.³⁸

Such impugning of a minor's claim to the succession amounted of course to an attack on his or her status as a legitimate heir to the decedent, so that the procedural questions surrounding the proof of this status were of paramount importance. It was from an early date routine, and at all times possible, to defer consideration of the issue of status, in order, above all, better to enable the minor to defend his or her interests as an adult, even as a young adult.³⁹

Ulpian reports an important innovation made by Hadrian: "... the deified Hadrian also laid down in a rescript as follows: 'With regard to the fact that the issue is typically postponed until adulthood, this is done in the interest of minor wards, so that they not suffer risk to their status before they can defend themselves. But if they have suitable persons to protect them and a case that is so ready for trial that it is to their advantage that it be heard promptly, and their *tutores* are willing to litigate the matter, a measure that has been devised

³⁵ On the aggressive pro-dowry policy, pursuant precisely to the Augustan marriage legislation, in general, see now Stagl 2009.

³⁶ On the *Edictum Carbonianum* see now Segnalini 2007 and 2008, who (tentatively) dates this later than most scholars, to 62 BCE (2007: 197–200). For the reference to Labeo, see Labeo-Ner. *Dig.* 37.10.9.

³⁷ On *bonorum possessio*, the possession of an estate granted by the praetor to someone whose claim to it he recognizes, see Frier and McGinn 2004: 329. For the status of minor at law, see the Introduction to this chapter.

³⁸ See Scaev. *Dig.* 5.2.20. One particular advantage enjoyed by the minor was that in the determination of status, provided a guaranty was offered, he or she played the role of defendant, meaning that the burden of proof fell on the adversary impugning that status: Segnalini 2007: 174.

³⁹ On the question of a connection between postponement and the minor's ability to defend his or her interests, see Ulp. *Dig.* 37.10.1.11; next note.

to benefit minor wards ought not to be turned to their disadvantage, and their status ought not to be left uncertain at the point when it can be rendered free from doubt.’”⁴⁰

In this same passage, Ulpian recites a series of factors encouraging a prompt consideration of the issue of status: if it is deferred, witnesses might change their tune, die, or lose credibility before being heard (he expresses a particular concern that the midwife and female slaves involved with the child’s birth might be getting on in years); documents are already available making a clear case on behalf of the minor; if the minor has not been able to exclude his or her adversaries from possession of the estate by giving security, they might degrade its value during a potentially lengthy postponement. His rather casual introduction of Hadrian’s rescript belies its importance, which is guaranteed by the emperor’s own words. What this measure did was to take the policy goal behind this regime, that of protecting the child’s best interests, and refine it further, so that the praetor no longer simply assumed that it was an advantage to delay resolution of the status question but was prepared to evaluate whether expediting it would better serve this aim.

The text is important evidence for a policy of protecting the best interests of the child that is especially prominent in the legislation of the second-century emperors. It is far from an isolated instance, even within the scope of Hadrian’s own policymaking. Worth noting is that in cases involving the invocation of the *Edictum Carbonianum* the *paterfamilias* was as a rule deceased,⁴¹ so that its goal was at bottom the protection of the status and property of full or half orphans. Here there is an obvious connection with the purpose of the Hadrianic *SC Tertullianum*.

This same emperor extended, through rescript, the regime of the *Edictum Carbonianum* to unborn children.⁴² This extension took its place beside another means of protecting the interests of an unborn child that had been available at least since the late Republic, the praetor’s assignment of a *missio in possessionem* of decedent’s property, upon the application of an expectant mother, either to the mother-to-be herself or to the unborn child and (advisably in the first instance, certainly in the second) his appointment of a *curator ventris* to safeguard the latter’s interests.⁴³ The requirements were, first, that the woman be pregnant both at the time of the death of the notional *paterfamilias*

⁴⁰ Ulp. (41 *ad edictum*) *Dig.* 37.10.3.5: “... divus etiam Hadrianus ita rescripsit: ‘Quod in tempus pubertatis res differri solet, pupillorum causa fit, ne de statu periclitentur, antequam se tueri possint. ceterum si idoneos habeant, a quibus defendantur, et tam expeditam causam, ut ipsorum intersit mature de ea iudicari, et tutores eorum iudicio experiri volunt: non debet adversus pupillos observari, quod pro ipsis excogitatum est, et pendere status eorum, cum iam possit indubitatus esse.’”

⁴¹ See, however, Ulp. *Dig.* 37.10.1.4 for an exception.

⁴² Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.14; Ulp. *Dig.* 43.4.3.3. Torrent 1984 argues that the measure came after Julian’s revision of the edict.

⁴³ Servius-Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.24–5 shows that these remedies were known to the Republican jurist Serv. Sulpicius Rufus. Although *missio in possessionem* might refer simply to the technical means by which *bonorum possessio* was acquired, it might also signify a lower level of protection of the holder’s interest in the property in question, that is, mere detention, as evidently here: see Segnalini (2007: 128–32) for the distinction (S. argues persuasively that the *bonorum possessio ex Edicto Carboniano* did not allow for *usucapio*).

and at the time the application was made. Next, it was necessary that the child when born enjoy status as a *suus heres* to the decedent and not have been validly disinherited or that at minimum there be uncertainty over one or both of these matters.⁴⁴ When, as in the typical case, the responsibilities of the *curator ventris* extended to property, these were, according to Ulpian, tantamount to those enjoyed by *curatores* and *tutores pupillorum*, in terms of the level of responsibility (*officium*) if not their legally recognized authority.⁴⁵ In particular, he furnished food, drink, clothing, and shelter to the expectant mother on a standard consistent with the financial resources (*facultates*) of the decedent husband and the social rank (*dignitas*) enjoyed by both him and his wife.⁴⁶ Gaius summarizes these details with a reference to the responsibility of the *curator* to provide her with *alimenta*, for the benefit of the unborn child, as he emphasizes.⁴⁷

Ulpian, following on his reference to Hadrian's extension of the *Edictum Carbonianum*, makes an important programmatic statement:

And, in general, we do not doubt that the Praetor ought to come to the aid of an unborn child for the same reasons upon which he has been accustomed to grant *bonorum possessio ex Edicto Carboniano* on behalf of a child already born, and the more readily, since the situation of an unborn child is more worthy of preferential treatment than that of one already born. For the unborn child receives preferential treatment so that he or she sees the light of day, the child already born so that he or she is placed in the appropriate agnatic kinship group (*familia*). So the unborn child ought to receive maintenance, since he or she is born not only for the benefit of the ascendant male to whom he or she is alleged to belong but also for the community.⁴⁸

Solicitude for the interests of unborn children is manifested in other areas of the law as well. Yet another provision of the praetor's edict, the *Edictum de inspiciendo ventre*, established procedures for inspection of a widow claiming to be pregnant and for surveillance of the circumstances surrounding her pregnancy and giving birth.⁴⁹ These rules were set in motion at her initiative and were designed to protect her

⁴⁴ Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.1–5. At birth the child would be eligible for *bonorum possessio*: Iul.-Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.11–2, Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.6, 7 pr. The woman did not have to be a widow, meaning that the children of divorcées were eligible: Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.10, 16.

⁴⁵ Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.22; cf., however, Hermogenian. *Dig.* 26.7.48, with Baccari 2002: 66.

⁴⁶ Ulp. *Dig.* 37.9.1.19, showing that a broad social range was contemplated, certainly by his time.

⁴⁷ Gaius *Dig.* 37.9.5.

⁴⁸ Ulp. (41 *ad edictum*) *Dig.* 37.9.1.15: "Et generaliter ex quibus causis Carbonianam bonorum possessionem puero praetor dare solitus est, ex hisdem causis ventri quoque subvenire praetorem debere non dubitamus, eo facilius, quod favorabilior est causa partus quam pueri: partui enim in hoc favetur, ut in lucem producat, puero, ut in familiam inducatur: partus enim iste alendus est, qui et si non solum parenti, cuius esse dicitur, verum etiam rei publicae nascitur."

⁴⁹ These are often confused in the modern scholarship with the provisions for the *missio in possessionem* and the *cura ventris*: Baccari 2002: 58–9. The other interested parties might decline to respond to a widow's notice of her pregnancy so that inspection and surveillance did not follow, even as these other provisions did, or the inspection and surveillance might occur in the absence of *missio* and *cura*.

child's claim to a share of her decedent husband's estate precisely by securing recognition of the child's status as the offspring of the decedent *paterfamilias* as well as to safeguard the interests of his family (or other beneficiaries under a will) in excluding a false claim.

The exact date of this regime is disputed. While some hold for an origin in the late Republic,⁵⁰ others more convincingly date it to the reign of Hadrian.⁵¹ A senatorial decree, the *SC Plancianum*—of unknown date but placed by most scholars in the late first to early second centuries CE⁵² and evidently deriving from Trajan's reign at the latest—had established similar procedures for pregnant divorcées, which were now perhaps revised. Yet another SC, known to be of Hadrianic date, established a similar procedure for children born during a marriage.⁵³ These measures were supplemented by another put into place by a rescript of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus that addressed a situation where, following a divorce, an ex-husband claimed his ex-wife was pregnant but she denied this.⁵⁴ The recognition of the father's interest in these three latter instances was rendered more explicit and emphatic for the obvious reason that under each of these scenarios he is still alive, and it should be made clear that, apart from the issue of support, at least for unborn children, none of these measures effectively diminished his right to treat his children as he wished, including disinheriting them. In other words, they did not create a set of universal rights for children born or unborn but only some recourse for those born into families with material assets to which they had a notional claim.⁵⁵ For us, the main point of interest is the extent to which they recognized an interest of the child in these matters, an interest that emerges here as something at least potentially distinct from those of immediate family members.

It is hardly the case, of course, that a father's legally recognized discretion over his children was unlimited. For one thing, he had obligations imposed upon him, not least that of providing material support to his children. In origin it mattered for this purpose that they were in his *potestas*.⁵⁶ This duty was eventually rendered reciprocal, meaning that children with means might be required to support a needy father and extended to other relatives, including mothers.⁵⁷ A father's responsibility to his children, eventually emancipated children as well as those remaining in his power, remained primary, however.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Watson 1974: 39; Evans Grubbs 2002: 325, on the basis of insecure evidence, however (the sources cited concern the *cura ventris*).

⁵¹ Metro 1964; Gardner 1984.

⁵² Volterra 1969/1993: 274; Zoz de Biasio 1999: 597; De Francesco 2002: 115; Evans Grubbs 2002: 310; Centola 2006: 177.

⁵³ Ulp. *Dig.* 25.3.3.1.

⁵⁴ Ulp. *Dig.* 25.4.1.1-9.

⁵⁵ See more generally Lamberti 2011.

⁵⁶ De Francesco 2002: 94.

⁵⁷ On the situation for siblings, see recently Albuquerque 2010a: 291–305; Albuquerque 2010b, and for the rather different one prevailing for spouses, see Halbwachs 2010.

Though this obligation has been argued to date from the very early principate,⁵⁸ most scholars view it as arising in the mid-second century.⁵⁹ While different explanations are possible, I offer the following. The SC *Plancianum*, whether this was passed under Vespasian or Trajan (to name the two most likely candidates), established the duty to provide support for an unborn child in case of divorce as well as procedures to confirm paternity. So it evidently built on elements of the praetor's edict regarding the unborn children of widows, namely, the rules for the *missio in possessionem* and *cura ventris*. Following a provisional determination of paternity, the child had to be maintained by the presumed father until a definitive judgment could be made.⁶⁰ Hadrian extended the regime of the SC *Plancianum* in some form to widows through a provision of the edict (*De inspiciendo ventre*) and then, through another SC, applied these same rules to cases where the marriage was still in place.

It is unclear whether the obligation of support originally extended beyond the birth of the child. This seems possible, but at any rate it is a logical extension, whenever it was made. Under Hadrian, perhaps, or at the latest under Antoninus Pius, the obligation that was evidently originally grounded in the duties of a *paterfamilias* blossoms, being rendered reciprocal (where both parties were among the already born and still living, of course) as well as extended to a range of blood relationships.⁶¹ It thus made into a legal duty (the *ius alimentorum*) what had long been a moral obligation and social expectation.⁶² In the end, *patria potestas* played at most a minor role.

So we see that a right to support, to *alimenta*, in addition to the ways it might be created privately, such as through contractual agreement or by testamentary bequest, also came to be recognized more broadly, thanks to state intervention, as a matter of public policy.⁶³ Much as with the *cura ventris*, material support meant the provision of expenses for food, drink, clothing, and shelter, at minimum.⁶⁴ Concern with the provision of such support is entirely consistent with the development of the alimentary

⁵⁸ Zoz 1970: 324–5; Zoz de Biasio 1999: 596–7 draws a connection with the *lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE, which imposed a duty on patrons to support freedpersons. Similarly, see Albuquerque (2006, 2010a: 133–68). On the duty between patrons and freedpersons, and vice versa, see now Zoz 2010.

⁵⁹ There is some disagreement even here over whether the obligation arose under Hadrian or later: see Schiller 1971; De Francesco 2001: 38–42, 49–50; De Francesco 2002: 118–27; Centola 2006: 174–5, with literature.

⁶⁰ De Francesco 2002: 134–5 persuasively insists on the distinction between the provisional and definitive determinations of paternity. The stakes were high in the latter case, since such judgments could not be reversed even when made in error: see McGinn 2010: 283. See also Zoz 1970: 333–4; Evans Grubbs 2005a: 40.

⁶¹ See Schiller 1971; De Francesco 2002: 94. Here, obviously, the eligibility (and liability) of a child for support did not depend on his or her age.

⁶² De Francesco 2001: 52, 62; Centola 2006: 173.

⁶³ See Centola 2006: 170–1.

⁶⁴ See Ulp. *Dig.* 25.3.12; Paul. *Dig.* 37.10.6.5 with Zoz 1970: 354–5; Centola 2006: 178–95, who argue that expenses for education came to be required as well, even if not technically qualifying as “*alimenta*.” It seems the resources available to the person obligated played a role: Albuquerque 2010a: 191–7. The alimentary programs discussed above provided diverse levels of support that were in some cases (particularly the state-sponsored ones) rudimentary: Duncan-Jones 1982: 144–5, 302–3.

programs discussed above and may even have been inspired in part by them.⁶⁵ Here the interest of the child is defined in a manner at least potentially distinct from those of other members of the family. Certainly both policies reached below the level of the elite.⁶⁶

Tutela

Provision for the maintenance of minor children without a *paterfamilias*, meaning one lost through death or emancipation, was also made through the institution of guardianship, or *tutela*.⁶⁷ The powers and responsibilities of *tutores* were extensive. Managing the ward's estate meant maintaining not only the financial well-being but also, indirectly, the welfare of the ward. In principle, the *tutor* enjoyed the status of an owner of the property in question, and his authorization was required for the ward to become obligated on a contract or to alienate property. This still left some scope for action on the part of children in tutelage, at least those deemed of sufficient age (in later law, certainly, this meant seven years and older). For the *tutor*, however, there was a palpable downside to wielding so much authority. *Tutores* could be compelled to take up their role by a public official and were liable if they failed to do so. Acting as the guardian of a minor child might itself entail liability under one or more headings if the *tutor* acted fraudulently or simply without due care. In this way the institution was, in the view of many scholars, transformed in important respects from a means to protect the interests of the agnatic kinship group to one of safeguarding the interests of the ward.

All the same, we find traces of the latter concern as early as the *Twelve Tables* (ca. 450 BCE), which punished fraudulent behavior by *tutores*.⁶⁸ These two goals, it is worth pointing out, are not necessarily in conflict with each other. This argument is supported by the fact that a later law, the *lex Atilia* (traditional date: 210 BCE), allowed minors (and women), at least older ones, if no agnatic or testamentary guardian were available, to approach the relevant public officials to request and even to nominate a *tutor*.⁶⁹ This is a frank recognition that a ward had interests to safeguard, even if these were not as privileged as they appear to have been in later periods.

⁶⁵ A broad construction of the roots of this concern seems supported by the legislation of Marcus Aurelius protecting the interests of recipients of testamentary bequests of *alimenta*: see Arcaria 2003: 194–8.

⁶⁶ For the alimentary programs, see above. For the policy on material support of relations, see Saller 1994: 126–7; Evans Grubbs 2005a: 42; Evans Grubbs 2011: 383, who argue persuasively that these rules were applied to persons of subelite status.

⁶⁷ What follows is especially summary and selective; in part it depends on the brief synthesis in McGinn 2013. For the definition of a minor at law see the Introduction to this chapter.

⁶⁸ *Twelve Tables* 8.9 Crawford.

⁶⁹ See Nörr 2001, esp. 67–9. Such *tutores* were assimilated by the same statute to agnatic guardians (*tutores legitimi*) Nörr 2001: 52.

Another element in this trend is the aforementioned compulsion by public officials of reluctant *tutores*. The first notice we have of this practice dates to the reign of Claudius.⁷⁰ This does not mean that recalcitrant guardians were entirely unknown before this time or that they were especially numerous at that point. We should in any case resist the temptation to postulate, in the complete absence of evidence, similar norms for the period preceding Claudius, and instead accept this development as the first sign of a concern that was to receive fuller expression in the century that followed.⁷¹

There is an important double edge to this development. On one hand, we find in legislation and juristic pronouncements from this period exactly what we would expect: increasing emphasis on serving the best interests of the child.⁷² At the same time a darker theme emerges. There is first a growing mass of statutes and juristic commentary, representing a body of rules so numerous and complex that the pursuit of policy has been argued to threaten the logical coherence of the law.⁷³ Second, a modest conclusion may be drawn about the social context of these rules. In the teeth of the dominant ideology, not all were evidently able or willing to live up to their responsibilities. This consideration holds for at least some of the issues previously raised. For example, in a perfect world, or at least one marked by a less than extravagant degree of familial harmony, would it really be necessary to resort to the legal authorities to compel close relatives to provide material support for each other?

A NEW MODEL FOR *PATRIA POTESTAS*

The second century CE witnessed developments in law conducive to the favorable treatment of children that were perhaps less directly related to their material welfare but still very much connected with their well-being. The most obvious examples concern a series of limitations placed on the exercise of *patria potestas*. Two changes to the law, both evidently innovations of Antoninus Pius, are worth mentioning. Under certain circumstances, a *paterfamilias* might be denied custody of a child in favor of the mother following a divorce.⁷⁴ The *paterfamilias* also saw limits placed by the same emperor upon his right to break up his daughter's happy marriage.⁷⁵

The jurists were not slow to take their cue from these developments. Indeed, it is likely that they played a role in their formulation. They devised a system of temporary custody that could be invoked whenever a possibly false claim of *patria potestas*—or a possibly

⁷⁰ Suet. *Claud.* 23.2; Just. *Inst.* 1.20.3.

⁷¹ So rightly insists Nörr 2001: 20, 25–6, 32, 53–8, 69.

⁷² The legislation of Marcus Aurelius on *tutela* merits emphasis: see, for example, Arcaria 2003: 206–14.

⁷³ See Nörr 2001: 23.

⁷⁴ Evans Grubbs 2005a: 38 is right to argue that this was an innovation of Pius'; see also McGinn 2010: 280–1.

⁷⁵ See Evans Grubbs 2005b: 112–22 for the later history of the (new) rule, on which see McGinn 2010: 281–2, with literature.

false contestation thereof—threatened a child’s well-being. This is described by Ulpian in a passage in which he invokes the authority of Julian: the praetor will hear the case immediately or defer consideration until the time of puberty/majority based at bottom on considerations of the child’s best interests.⁷⁶ With this holding we see a concern to privilege the interests of the child whose status is in dispute over those of either litigant.

The overall trend is clear and is rendered even clearer, and at the same time perhaps more complicated, by a passage from the Severan jurist Marcian. This reports an earlier case involving what from remote times was regarded as an essential element of *patria potestas*, the power of life and death (*vitae necisque potestas*): “While hunting, a man had killed his son, who (at the time) was conducting an illicit affair with his stepmother. The deified Hadrian is said to have exiled him to an island, because in killing him he used more a brigand’s right than a father’s. For a father’s power (*patria potestas*) ought to be founded upon *pietas*, not cruelty.”⁷⁷ As is obvious, this case concerns an adult child, but to judge from the other available evidence the principle would evidently apply to both juvenile and adult children in power, to all but infants in fact. In other words, as far as we are able to tell, the killing of children not infants was a rare phenomenon, mainly associated with early Rome, prior to the emergence of a contemporary historical record in the late third century BCE.⁷⁸

So what was new, if anything, about Hadrian’s intervention? I think it useful to draw a distinction between theory and practice. The already existing constraints on the latter are manifested here above all by the fact that the father thought it necessary to conceal his exercise of the *vitae necisque potestas*. If anything, such limitations would have been more keenly felt in the wake of this decision. But Hadrian’s real contribution was perhaps on the level of ideology, which is of course not to deny that this too would have resonated in lived experience. By linking the exercise of the “power of life and death” with the core family value of *pietas*, along with its intimations of devotion and duty, and perhaps even reciprocity, Hadrian recast this vital aspect of *patria potestas* to the point of redefinition. As a consequence, he rendered resort to it not only impractical but also virtually inconceivable regarding any children but infants. In this, his relationship to the policy of Augustus is complex, if only because that policy was itself complex, as for example even a brief contemplation of the *ius occidendi* will suggest.⁷⁹ All the same, it

⁷⁶ Iul.-Ulp. (71 *ad edictum*) *Dig.* 43.30.3.4. Discussion in McGinn 2010: 279–98.

⁷⁷ Marci. (14 *inst.*) *Dig.* 48.9.5: “Divus Hadrianus fertur, cum in venatione filium suum quidam necaverat, qui novercam adulterabat, in insulam eum deportasse, quod latronis magis quam patris iure eum interfecit: nam patria potestas in pietate debet, non atrocitate consistere.” On this text, see Torrent 2007.

⁷⁸ See the evidence and discussion at Frier and McGinn 2004: 191–210. On the killing of infants by *patresfamilias*, see Shaw 2001: 57–77, who goes further than I believe many would in denying an historical basis to the *vitae necisque potestas*.

⁷⁹ At the risk of some oversimplification, one might claim that the “right of slaying,” granted under certain carefully defined circumstances to the husbands and fathers of adulterous women, (re)asserts the ideology of the *vitae necisque potestas* while placing it under severe limitations in practice: see Treggiari 1991: 282–5; McGinn 1998: 202–7. At the same time, there is a certain leveraging of the ideology (as well as some practical limitations) to be seen in Augustus’ actions as recorded in Sen. *Clem.* 1.15–6, with Frier and McGinn 2004: 196–8.

would be an error, in my view, to assume that Hadrian's holding was so much at variance with popular attitudes that it threatened to undermine the goals of the *lex Iulia et Papia*.

The ultimate significance of this move is perhaps suggested, if not guaranteed, by its citation on the part of the Severan jurist Marcian. For support we can invoke a comment by the jurist Paul, Marcian's contemporary, who makes the casual observation of *sui heredes* that it was possible to disinherit them since, after all, it had once been possible to kill them.⁸⁰ One may well ask whether this is meant as an expression of nostalgia or irony, but I think the point regarding the state of the *vitae necisque potestas* in late classical law is clear.⁸¹

It is important to recognize that the Antonine and Severan periods do not represent any sort of Golden Age for Roman children. *Patresfamilias* retained powers to discipline their children physically short of killing them without evident interference from the state. Children were still exposed to corporal punishment in connection with their education. Many were no doubt vulnerable to sexual and other forms of physical abuse, and not just from authority figures.⁸² Even on the level of law it is important to place our modest results within a context that acknowledges that the interests of parents and children were not inevitably perceived as antagonistic to each other. Being a parent at Rome was a status, and one moreover exalted by custom, law, and the lived experience of social life. So fathers did not lose ground on every front, as we can see from the law of property and that of obligations where the *paterfamilias* continued to ride high.

The trend that I have identified, a favoring of children by the legal authorities that precedes the Augustan marriage legislation but that is considerably empowered by these laws, should be viewed perhaps not as a grand evolutionary process but as a direction or tendency, in which the tension between the interests of parents and those of children, among other things, was addressed a number of times without ever being entirely resolved. To take just one example, the new recognition in the mid-second century of rights to support by close relatives, the *ius alimentorum*, emphasized their reciprocal nature in a manner that reached below the level of the elite. Just as parents were required to support needy children, children were supposed to support indigent parents. Of

⁸⁰ Paul. (2 *ad Sabinum*) *Dig.* 28.2.11: ... itaque post mortem patris non hereditatem percipere videntur, sed magis liberam bonorum administrationem consequuntur. hac ex causa licet non sint heredes instituti, domini sunt: nec obstat, quod licet eos exheredare, quod et occidere licebat. ("Therefore, after the death of the father, they [the *sui heredes*] are not regarded as acquiring an inheritance; instead, they (just) attain unobstructed power to dispose over their property. For this reason, even though they have not been designated as heirs, they are owners. Nor is it an objection that it is permitted to disinherit them, for it was also (once) permitted to kill them."). This is consistent, I believe, with the statement (perhaps attributable to Paul himself) in the context of rules discussed above that "The person who denies material support is regarded ... as killing ... an unborn or newly born child" (*Necare videtur ... partum ... qui alimonia denegat*): Paul. (2 *sent.*) *Dig.* 25.3.4 = *Sent. Paul.* 2.24.10.

⁸¹ See also Ulp. (2 *adult.*) *Dig.* 48.8.2 with Frier and McGinn 2004: 199–201.

⁸² See, for example, Laes 2011: 222–77.

course where there was no potential conflict of interests in play, or when these were thought to align, those of children might be given more emphasis. This does not necessarily mean that *patria potestas* was in a state of decline, as many have argued, but it was certainly being transformed. One point seems clear. Whatever one may wish to postulate for their position in social life, Roman children, and not only upper-class children, were far from marginal to the concerns of policymakers.

A NOTE ON THE LEGAL SOURCES

My conception of the central period of Roman law is a bit more extensive than the usual definition of its classical period, which runs from ca. 31 BCE to ca. 235 CE. In this chapter, *Dig.* stands for the *Digest* of Justinian, a sixth-century CE compilation of classical juristic sources, and *Just. Inst.* for the *Institutes* of Justinian, an introductory textbook based in large part on classical sources. Other legal evidence cited consists of late antique epitomes of classical juristic sources: the *Sentences* (*Sententiae*) attributed to the jurist Paul but actually of considerably later date and the *Excerpts from Ulpian's Writings* (*Tituli ex corpore Ulpiani*; also sometimes called *Ulpiani Regularum Epitome*), which probably has only a loose connection to Ulpian. Although these late imperial texts derive their substance in large part from earlier classical sources, they have been subjected to postclassical abbreviation, at minimum. Of course, a number of nonlegal sources, such as Suetonius, are cited as evidence for law.

Among legal sources, I most often rely on Justinian's *Digest*. This evidence is cited according to the number of the book and title from which a fragment is drawn, the number of the fragment itself (sometimes called *lex*), and the subsection (sometimes called paragraph), if any. Subsections are also labeled by number, though the first is called *principium*, abbreviated pr., an awkward usage that developed during the Renaissance. It is customary to cite the name of the classical jurist associated with a given fragment and sometimes (as here) the name of any jurist he cites, both usually in abbreviated form. Often an abbreviation of the name of the work and the number of the book from which the fragment derives are given as well. The information on jurist and work may precede or come after the citation of the *Digest* fragment itself. In the former case, the effect, if not the intent, is to emphasize the status of the source as classical law, in the latter, as a feature of a sixth-century compilation produced by the Byzantine legal authorities.

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PART IV

EDUCATION AND
EDUCATIONAL
PHILOSOPHY IN THE
CLASSICAL WORLD

CHAPTER 18

EDUCATION IN PLATO'S *LAWS*

CYNTHIA B. PATTERSON

I say that in children the first childish sensations are pleasure and pain, and that it is in these first that goodness and badness come to the soul...I term the goodness that first comes to children education (*paideia*). (Plato, *Laws* 2.653a–b)

Education (*paideia*) is the drawing or leading of children to the right principles as enunciated by the law and confirmed by the experience of the oldest and most worthy. (Ibid., 659d)

Every man and woman ought to pass through life playing at the noblest of pastimes (*paizonta kallistas paidias*)...one should spend the whole of life at “play”—sacrificing, singing, dancing—so that he [she] can win the favor of the gods and protect himself [herself] from enemies and conquer them in battle. (*Laws* 7.803c–e)¹

INTRODUCTION

FOR Plato in the *Laws*, education in its most basic sense is about training the child's experience of pleasure and pain. Children need to be led to experience pleasure and pain in the correct ways, but their rudimentary rationality requires that they be led not by argument but by games and songs. But education is not only for children. The enjoyment and educational value of music, dance, and song do not end in childhood. These remain the “noblest” of human pastimes and a source of happiness for both individual and society. Play—in music and dance—then is a serious subject, and nowhere more than in Plato's last work, the *Laws*. Although Plato in the *Laws* may

¹ Opening quotations are from R. G. Bury (Loeb Library) with some modification. In this essay I have also made use of Trevor Saunders' Penguin translation. In both cases, translations have been checked against the Greek text.

often seem to be playful in his discussion of children's play, as we watch his Athenian stranger instructing the elderly Spartan Megillus and Cretan Clinias on the nurture of society's youngest members, Plato's own play here is as serious as the play that, in his view, should be the foundation of one's education. "Serious matters need serious attention," says the Athenian (803c1–2)—and nothing is more serious for a human life rightly lived than the right kind of play. Proper "play," it turns out, is what human life is all about.

The first part of this chapter reviews the specific details of the Athenian's recommendations for children's education in the *Laws*. My justification for taking space for a detailed account is that the program needs to be seen as a whole to appreciate the distinctive Platonic touch applied to the reform of Greek education. I also think its details are a large part of what make the program interesting, particularly in the way the bodily experience of pleasure in movement and song provides a unifying theme throughout the discussion—and throughout life. Then, in the next section, I consider the relationship of the *Laws*' educational program to contemporary Greek educational practice. Following the lead of Glenn Morrow (1960), I emphasize the common Greek cultural traditions underlying the *Laws*' social project but go further than Morrow to dispute the frequently heard claim that Plato's ideas about public education derive from or were inspired in any significant way by Spartan practice in particular.² Rather, taking a cue from a Morrow footnote, I suggest that Plato's educational program in the *Laws* may have been a prime source for key details of the utopian "mirage" of Sparta that emerged in later classical antiquity and has continued to thrive to the present day (see Kennell in this volume). The Spartan story (and the argument) is admittedly a complex one, and a full discussion is not possible in this chapter.³ Here I want simply to throw a bit of doubt on the idea that Plato's educational program (including his recommendations for the education of girls) was inspired by historical contemporary Spartan practice, for which the evidence is less secure than often supposed. The third section returns to the theme (introduced in Book 1 of the *Laws*) of education as the management of pleasure and pain and to Plato's image of the puppet (*thauma*) pulled by the strings of emotions in anticipation of pleasure or pain—and also one "golden" string of reason (1.644e–646b). And finally, in a brief Coda, I conclude with a comment on the significance of Plato's argument for a liberal arts education, in a work often thought to be illiberal and authoritarian, and on his view that in the best possible world human life should be both play and ongoing education.

² A striking example of the rootedness of the idea of a Spartan origin for Plato's utopian education is the statement of Anton Powell: "That Sparta inspired much of this text [the *Laws*] was established for modern readers by Glenn Morrow's study, *Plato's Cretan City*" (Powell 1994: 273). Morrow did see points of influence, but his larger argument was quite different. See also Kahn 1961.

³ The classic work on education in the ancient world, including Sparta, is Marrou 1948/1956. On Spartan education, see Ducat 2006 and Kennell 1995 (see also the chapter by Kennell in this volume). There continues to be a lively debate on the degree of Spartan "exceptionalism," for which see Hodkinson and Hanson in Hodkinson 2009b: 417–98.

PLATO'S LAWS: A PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION

The topic of the discussion of the *Laws* is law—but with the Athenian's insistence that the true focus of law should be virtue, education emerges as a key issue early in Book 1. Plato's Athenian first acknowledges the concern with virtue shown by Sparta and Crete, the home cities of his two companions, but then immediately challenges their understanding of the full meaning of virtue. The Athenian is notably critical of the narrow focus on military courage in Sparta and Crete and of their training their citizens to endure pain to the neglect of pleasure. When the Spartan somewhat smugly draws attention to Spartan laws against drunkenness and the pleasure of wine (noting his disapproval of Athenian behavior at the festival of Dionysus), the Athenian presents him and his Cretan companion with an extended argument for the educational value of well-run drinking parties (from 637b)—for which he develops a theory of pleasure and pain and the image of the “puppet” noted earlier. Book 1 concludes with a virtuoso demonstration of the place that knowing how to run a drinking party holds in the “political” art.

Book 2 continues the discussion of pleasure and pain as essential experiences of childhood, with the Athenian offering an expanded definition of education as “the initial acquisition of virtue by the child, when the feelings of pleasure and affection, pain and hatred, that well up in his soul are channeled in the right courses before he can understand the reason why” (653b). There follows a leisurely and wide-ranging discussion of the importance of music and dance and another definition of an “uneducated man” as one who has not been taught to take part in a chorus (the *apaideutos* is the *achoreutos*—654a). This is all important but still preliminary; the full education program is unveiled only in Book 7, after the new city is founded, its citizens settled, and children are born: “Now that the boys and girls have been born, I suppose their education (*paideia*) and nurture (*trophe*) will be the most suitable topic to deal with next” (788a, Saunders, modified).

In the earliest phase, education is primarily a matter of simple nurture (*trophe*), and the Athenian Stranger's first point, to which Clinias responds with some amazement, is that “correct” nurturing (*orthē trophe*) must start in the womb. Recognizing that the embryo is growing and developing within its mother's womb, Plato recommends that a pregnant woman should get plenty of exercise (789e2, *peripatein*). The illustrative example he provides—fighting birds kept in an owner's pocket and so exercised as he walks about—may seem a little odd, but the notion of the child as a wild animal recurs later in the discussion (808d5). The key idea here is that appropriate movement is essential to proper health and the development of the child; accordingly, after his or her birth, the child should similarly be kept moving: “we shall compel the nurse by legal penalties to keep carrying the children somehow, either to the fields or to the temples or to their relatives (*pros oikeious*), all the time until they are able to stand upright” (789e). Movement not rest, and song (*melodia*) not quiet, is the best way to educate the soul of the newly born child and prevent the negative consequences

of “fear and frenzy” (791a), as in the calming of Bacchic Corybants with music and dance:

Thus when mothers have children suffering from sleeplessness, and want to lull them to rest, the treatment they apply is to give them not quiet but motion, for they rock them constantly in their arms; and instead of silence, they use song (*melodia*) and thus they enchant their children (like the victims of Bacchic frenzy) by employing the combined movements of dance and song as a remedy. (790d–e, Bury)⁴

Plato sees the young child’s sleeplessness as a sort of fear and introduces the distinctive educational point that a soul “subjected to fright from childhood will be likely to grow up timid” (791b) and more broadly that the very young should not live in any sort of pain; in contrast, motion (and song) can both ward off pain such as fear and bring a type of pleasure that contributes to the development of a soul that is “cheerful/good natured” (*eukolos*) and “strong-hearted” (*eupsychos*).⁵ Now, since this period of childhood lasts not less than three years (a significant amount of time for a soul to be unhappy or afraid),⁶ the Athenian wonders, “if one were to try to secure by every available means that our nursling (*to trephomenon*) should experience the least possible amount of grief or fear or pain of any kind, would not the soul of the nursling be made more cheerful and good natured?” (*euthumon* and *hileon*, 792b). To this the not particularly philosophic Clinias responds, “Clearly we should give that nursling many pleasures (*pollas hedonas*),” prompting the Athenian to come back with “such action would be the worst possible corruption” (*megiste diaphthora*, 792b–c) with the worst possible consequences for the young child’s soul and, since a person’s “entire character develops through habit” (792e) from earliest childhood, for the adult soul as well.

Clinias’ mistake was to move from the avoidance of pain to the provision of “many pleasures.” Rather, explains the Athenian, the “correct life” (*orthos bios*) should be (from earliest childhood) a “middle state” of “good humor” (*hileon*). In fact, this “middle state” is especially important for women in pregnancy, who, by avoiding extreme pleasure and pains, will nurture their own (and presumably their child’s) “cheerful, sweet-tempered, and calm” character. With Clinias’ quick assent to the Athenian’s point, the discussion of the earliest education, in which the child is without both effective speech and independent locomotion, comes to an end.

⁴ Since the Bacchae are put into their frenzy by music as well as cured “homeopathically” (so Saunders ad loc. in his Penguin translation) by appropriately disciplined music, we can see quite clearly here Plato’s belief that there are good and bad sorts of music and dance.

⁵ 792b. See also Plato’s earlier comment in Book 2: “... every animal has the natural habit of jumping about. The human animal, as we said, acquired a sense of rhythm, and that led to the birth of dancing. The tune suggested rhythm and awakened the memory of it, and out of the union of the two was born choral singing and dancing as a recreation” (*choreian kai paidian eteketen*, 673d, Saunders).

⁶ Cf. Plato’s comment on the predominance of growth in the first five years: “men grow more in the first five years of life than in the next twenty” (788e).

Throughout this section, the Athenian shows his awareness of how ridiculous (see, e.g., 790a) some of his proposals might seem if construed as actual laws (as in the three great waves of paradox in *Republic* 5). And now, as he concludes this discussion of the earliest education, he stops to emphasize their importance as “unwritten *nomima*” or “ancestral *nomoi*,” likening such rules or practices to “bonds” (*desmoi*) holding together a *politeia* and then further as the “props” (*ereismata*) that undergird a building and without which “everything would come tumbling down” (793c)—thus the importance of education and nurture of the city’s youngest children.

At age three, the young child enters a new and more social phase of his or her education. Now, says the Athenian, the proper formation of the soul requires games (*paidiai*). Children’s games at this age, he asserts, are “*autophueis*” (arising naturally): children “generally invent them by themselves whenever they get together” (794a2–3). But Plato recommends that culture (or *nomos*) intervene in two ways: first, the children are gathered together in twelve “nursery schools” located in the neighborhood temples/sanctuaries of each of the twelve divisions of the polis, and their play there is supervised by women, one for each division, chosen by the city’s female “supervisors of marriage” (794b); second (although Plato mentions it first), discipline and punishment now enter the child’s education. Discipline then is connected with entry into the social context, suggesting that it relies to some extent on the child’s emerging social awareness. Discipline, however, should not, the Athenian emphasizes, be dishonorable or humiliating so as to cause resentment.⁷ And with these brief but loaded comments Plato moves on. A key moment in the socialization of the child has occurred, and it is instructive that it occurs in sanctuaries; religious festivals and ritual are for Plato essential elements of public education.

At age six more formal education begins, with, however, the same focus on movement and song that we have observed from the outset; the fact that Plato provides no upper age limit for this phase may reflect his belief that education is a lifelong activity.⁸ Now, at age six, says the Athenian, the sexes should be separated in their education: “boys (*koroi*) spending their time with boys, and likewise girls (*parthenoi*) with girls” (794c). The content of the education, however, should apparently be the same for both sexes, even (or especially) insofar as it relates to the use of weapons. This radical proposal (anticipated of course in the *Republic* but now apparently extended to all free children, not just the future rulers and their auxiliaries) is presented here in a casual manner: “The girls also, if they agree to it, must share in the lessons, and especially such as relate to the use of arms” (794d, Bury). But although it is first introduced casually, Plato insists on the point throughout the remainder of his discussion of education (e.g., 804e). Here, at its first introduction, the thought of educating girls prompts Plato to digress on the dangers of training one hand at the expense of the other and on the benefits of ambidexterity. In

⁷ Quite remarkably, Plato considers that the same reserve should be applied in the punishment of slaves (793e).

⁸ Cf. Angier 2011, who noted that “middle childhood [beginning at age five or six] is when the parts of the brain most closely associated with being human finally come online: our ability to control our impulses, to reason, to focus, to plan for the future.”

fact, this is not a digression at all, but an implicit argument for educating both metaphorical “hands,” in other words, both male and female. The Athenian sticks stoutly to his literal point as well, however, concluding that “they [the officials] must see that every boy and girl grows up versatile in the use of both hands and both feet, so that they don’t ruin their natural abilities by their acquired habits, so far as they can be prevented” (795d).⁹

The formal lessons (*mathemata*; 794c, 795d) begun at this age fall into in two areas: “the gymnastic which concern the body, and the musical which aim at goodness of the soul (*eupsychia*).” However, given that song and dance remain important elements of the musical lesson, the body is not uninvolved even here (nor is gymnastic irrelevant to the soul, as we know from the *Republic*). Plato divides gymnastic into dancing and wrestling, with approval given for both girls and boys to join in training with a military tone: “It shall be the rule for the children (*paisin*), from the age of six until they reach military age, whenever they approach any god and form processions, to be always equipped with arms and horse, and with dance and march, now quick now slow, to make their supplications to the gods and the children of gods” (796c, Bury).¹⁰ Turning to the second area of study, *mousike*, the Athenian discovers that he once again must take courage and broach a novel and strange idea: all children’s games (*paidiai*) must remain unchanged and unchangeable.¹¹ Here again, Plato takes it as given that children’s games involve movement and song, and taking inspiration, he says, from the Egyptians, he suggests that the city should make all songs and dance sacred. Any departure then will be an act of impiety. The content and character of the approved songs follow familiar Platonic lines: (1) their *logos* is auspicious (*euphemos*), avoiding, for example, blasphemous words that provoke unsuitable passions; (2) songs are hymns to the gods; and (3) the hymns or prayers show proper understanding of what should be prayed for. These themes draw the Athenian away from the specific educational discussion at hand and toward a larger meditation on the insignificance of human life in the face of divinity, a topic to which Plato returns in Books 10 and 12—and to which I shall return at the end of this chapter.

For now—in response to the Spartan Megillus’ comment that “you seem to have a low opinion of mankind, stranger” (804b, Bury)—the Athenian agrees to continue on the assumption that the human tribe might in fact merit serious attention and so returns to his discussion of the education of children, emphasizing again that he speaks of both boys and girls and now insisting that this education is compulsory, since the children belong more to the polis than to their parents. Public education is housed in public buildings in the center of the city, with paid teachers recruited, interestingly, from abroad for both “military

⁹ For a discussion of the differences in the education of the rulers/philosophers in the *Laws* versus the *Republic*, see Bobonich 2002: chapter 3.

¹⁰ Saunders limits this rule to “young boys,” but given Plato’s emphasis on giving boys and girls the same training, as in the preceding sentence, this seems unjustified.

¹¹ Apparently the freedom children enjoy from age three through six to invent their own games “naturally” (794b) ends at age six. Plato does not explain, but it is striking that just when children become more able “to reason, to focus, to plan for the future” (see note 8), Plato finds them more in need of authoritarian guidance.

and cultural" (*mousike*) studies.¹² But before the discussion can turn to the reason for this hiring policy, the Athenian is off on an extended argument for female education—and another playful yet serious challenge to his Spartan companion. He criticizes the Laconian practice as “a midway” (*dia mesou*) solution that requires women to share in “gymnastic and musical” education but nonetheless leaves them unequipped to defend their city and their children (806a) and furthermore encourages “disorderly” (*ataktos*) behavior.¹³ In a positive vein, he also insists on his own proposal for full equality for male and female in his educational system, including preparation for military action, maintaining that any other regime will give the polis only one-half of a happy life (*eudaimonos hemisu biou*, 806c).

Turning to the curriculum for public education, the Athenian now considers literature (or letters, *grammata*), lyre playing, and arithmetic (*logisma*), that is, as much as is required for the purpose of war and household management. Similarly, students should study astronomy—the course of the heavenly bodies, stars, and sun and moon—to the extent necessary for the organization of the civic calendar.¹⁴ The subjects should be pursued sequentially, with literature studied from age ten to thirteen, lyre playing from thirteen to sixteen. There are no exceptions, either to cut short or to extend the study (for the child who either enjoys or who “hates” the subject). More specifically, in the study of literature/letters the student should “just work at letters sufficiently to be able to read and write,” but neither “speed nor beauty of handwriting” is required. But what should they read? Here the Athenian raises the familiar (to Plato’s readers) problem that much of traditional literature is “dangerous” (*kindunon*, 811b) for children to read, let alone memorize and recite. Then, by a sort of divine inspiration, he realizes that the discussion in which he and his companions are engaged is in fact the most suitable reading material for the young students.¹⁵

Now turning to the subject of lyre playing and music, the Athenian expects his students (age thirteen to sixteen) to acquire quickly (that is, in three years) a “working knowledge” of the instrument (*to tes mousikes chresimon*, 812e). Still, he says, returning to the much earlier discussion, even if they are advanced musicians, both boys and girls must learn to dance and exercise, although now segregated and with separate instructors. There follows a long digression (or so it might seem to someone still waiting for the completion of the educational curriculum with arithmetic and astronomy) on the

¹² This is puzzling, since it makes the teachers sound like sophists! Perhaps teaching seems too “professional” a job for a citizen. Although it is often assumed that classical Sparta provided this sort of public education, the evidence is disputed—and the evidence most often adduced is Plato’s *Laws*.

¹³ The two previous examples of gender order are Thrace, where women are no different than slaves, and Athens, where everything in the household is turned over to women (*panta chemata paredomen tais gunaixi*, 805e) including, it would seem, household slaves. Note, however, that Plato does not suggest that women in Athens were in the position of slaves; Cleary 2003: 168. Plato seems to suggest that the Spartan gender rules stopped “midway,” in a sort of no man’s land, so had no coherent system at all.

¹⁴ “The arranging of days into monthly periods, and of months into a year, in each instance, so that the seasons, with their respective sacrifices and feasts, may each be assigned its due position by being held as nature dictates” (809d)—that is, keeping the political year synchronized with the natural year.

¹⁵ Bobonich 2002: 106–7, having in mind the preambles to the *Laws*, took this as a serious proposal.

importance and nature of different kinds of dance, with emphasis again on the participation of girls. The section is finally brought to an end with a typically Platonic comment on the corrupting character of contemporary tragedy and comedy and a reiteration of the proposal that the very discussion in progress is “the best and most beautiful tragedy” (817b), whose reading and performance thus provides the best possible education for its citizens.

When the Athenian now, finally, turns his attention to mathematics and astronomy, he recommends, as in the case of letters and lyre playing, a basic introduction of “the necessities,” that is, understanding “the nature of one and of two, and of even and odd numbers in general” along with the distinction between day and night and the “circuits of the sun and moon and all the other stars” (818c). It appears that study of basic arithmetic or “counting” (*logisma*) will already have begun in early childhood, as in Egypt, where (says the Athenian) very young children learn about adding and dividing through “play and fun,” using such things as apples and garlands. Students (or “the young”) should also, in contrast to the shameful ignorance of the contemporary Greek world, be introduced to the rudiments of geometry including the principles of commensurability and incommensurability (820d).¹⁶

Clinias may be a bit lost here, but he rebounds to pursue the question of the astronomy requirement for the city’s children. The Athenian has linked this science requirement with a religious one, asserting that “our citizens and our children ought to learn so much concerning the gods of heaven as will enable them not to blaspheme about them, but always to speak piously both at sacrifices and when they pray reverently at prayers” (821c–d, Bury modified). And, Clinias asks, what would this knowledge, essential to preventing blasphemy, be? That those heavenly bodies that we call planets (“wanderers”), says the Athenian (and Plato), “do not wander” (822a). And with that truth, emphasizing the divine and perfect order of the cosmos, the extended discussion of the educational curriculum comes to an end (822d).

PLATONIC EDUCATIONAL THEORY: SOURCES AND INFLUENCE

Plato’s proposals in the *Laws* for a public educational curriculum are remarkable. Here we see Plato in his old age reflecting on the social and psychological development of the very young (even the unborn) and offering a program for what some today might call a

¹⁶ “My dear Clinias,” says the Athenian, “when I was told quite lately of our condition in regard to this matter, I was utterly astounded myself: it seemed to me to be the condition of guzzling swine rather than of human beings, and I was ashamed, not only of myself, but of all the Greek world” (819, Bury). Clinias earlier seems to admit (818e) that neglect of mathematical education is particularly a problem in Crete and Sparta; modern readers might find that Plato’s criticism has a contemporary resonance.

general liberal arts education required for all citizen children. Later, he turns to the education of the new city's "guardians," who must of course be educated in a more precise way than the majority of people (964d–968a); this more precise education seems likely to have been similar to that of guardians of the *Republic's* "Kallipolis" (cf. Bobonich 2002; Cleary 2003). But the interesting point here is the considerable, careful, and creative attention Plato gives in the *Laws* to more general (and less precise) public education that begins in earliest childhood.

Where do these ideas come from? In important ways, of course, Plato's educational proposals are rooted in his distinctive understanding of the nature of the soul, the experience of pleasure and pain, and the teaching of virtue. The third section of this chapter will consider very briefly those philosophical issues as they affect the *Laws's* educational program. But Plato's (or the "Athenian's") emphasis on the importance of education—of music, dance, and gymnastics—was, as Glenn Morrow (1960) argued, very much a value shared with contemporary Greek society, and participation in choral dance and song were key elements of Greek public religion.¹⁷ In the *Laws*, Plato makes this participation compulsory and legislates rules for what should be sung and danced. As in other areas of his legislation (for instance, property law and political organization), Plato's education program is thus a philosophic reform of traditional Greek culture. That Plato was particularly inspired by contemporary *Spartan* educational practice, however, is generally accepted without question as "common knowledge."¹⁸ But the question is a bit more complex than is generally assumed. Two points are critical: first, the lack of contemporary evidence (especially the silence of Xenophon) for compulsory education, as opposed to military training, in Sparta; and second, Plato's clear and strong criticism of the character of Spartan military training—including, it should be noted, his questioning of the educational value of the Spartan "national" poet Tyrtaeus (629–30). According to the Athenian, the virtues Tyrtaeus promotes are shared by mercenaries, who are for the most part "reckless and insolent rogues and just about the most witless people around" (630b, Saunders modified).¹⁹

The creation of the "Spartan mirage," that is, of a society set at odds to the rest of the Greek world (and especially Athens) with its enforced austerity and military focus, had already begun in the fifth century and became accentuated in the course of the Peloponnesian War.²⁰ Herodotus knows the story of Lycurgus and the establishment of Spartan *eunomia* (1.65) but has nothing to say about education. Thucydides presents

¹⁷ p. 302; see also Garland in this volume.

¹⁸ This view is prevalent in both philosophical and historical discussions. See, for example, Samaras 2010: 172–7 (philosophical) and Powell (1994) (historical). In her *Spartan Women* (2002) Appendix "Sources for the History of Spartan Women," Pomeroy made the remarkable claim that "it is perhaps more accurate to state that Plato is not so much a source for Spartan women; rather, Spartan women were an inspiration for Plato's ideas about the roles of women in utopia" (p. 148).

¹⁹ Plato's offhand comment that Tyrtaeus was an "Athenian by birth who became a citizen of Sparta" (629a) seems to me a joke for the benefit of his Spartan companion. It has, however, often been taken seriously.

²⁰ For the introduction of the term "mirage" see Ollier 1933; for continuing debate, see Hodkinson 2009a with bibliography. See also Kennell in this volume.

Pericles as comparing the Spartan *paideia* with the Athenian: “the Spartans, from their earliest boyhood, are subjected to the most laborious training (*epiponos askesis*) in courage,” while the Athenians growing up without such restraints (*aneimenos*) are equally ready to face danger (2.39). Although Plato might not have wanted to admit it, this is much the same view of the Spartan “education” in courage as presented in the *Laws*. Clearly, Thucydides does not provide support for the notion that Sparta was exceptional in having a system of public education; rather, it was exceptional in the harshness of its training (*askesis*). But if anyone would be likely to provide evidence for Spartan public education, it would be philo-Spartan Xenophon. Yet Xenophon does nothing of the sort. Rather, he says that, outside of Sparta, parents send their children to teachers “to learn to read and write, to study the arts, and to practice gymnastics,” but in Sparta the public official called the *paidonomos* toughens up the Spartan youth by making them go barefoot; requiring them to endure heat, cold, and hunger; and teaching them to steal—all backed up with the liberal use of physical punishment (*Politeia of the Spartans* 2; see Kennell in this volume). Nor is the “education” of women described by Xenophon worthy of the term; here the Spartan concern is that women be as physically fit as possible so as to bear strong children. In contrast, Plato requires that in his city girls be educated for the sake of the happiness of the city and neither mentions their future reproductive role nor suggests that that is why the state should concern itself with them.

Even if we turn to Plutarch’s *Life of Lycurgus*, with its well-recognized postclassical inventions, anachronisms, and Platonic themes,²¹ the image of Spartan education that emerges is much like Xenophon’s: Spartan fathers are required to enroll their sons in companies or “herds” (*eis agelas*) where they would “share sport and study” (16.4). “Of reading and writing (*grammata*) they learned just what was necessary” (16.6). Plutarch’s reticence on Spartan education is striking; perhaps his Platonism has produced a bit of caution. Plato is quite clear in his criticism of the character and goal of Spartan education, both for girls, whose education is incomplete, leaving them with no clear private or public role; and for boys, whose fear-driven training leaves them good warriors, perhaps, but not good citizens.

I therefore find it difficult to accept the common wisdom that Sparta was in any significant way an inspiration or model for Plato’s educational program in the *Laws*. One argument sometimes adduced in support of the Spartan model is Aristotle’s comment (*EN* 1180a24–b1) that Sparta was distinctive in having a system of compulsory education for all citizens, whereas education was a private matter (mostly for the wealthy) in other Greek poleis. The comment is misleading (was Aristotle already seeing the “mirage”?), not only because it blurs the distinction between physical training (what Thucydides calls *askesis*) and a more complete *paideia* that attends to both body and soul but also because it fails to recognize the real educational importance of public religion in Greek culture. If we understand, as did Plato, the role that music, dance, and religious festivals

²¹ It is clear that Plutarch had the *Laws* in mind, if not in hand, when writing the *Life of Lycurgus*; see, for example, the explicit references to Plato in the discussion of the “mixed” form of government (*Lycurgus* 7).

played in the education of children (of all ages), then it is clear that education was a public concern in most if not all Greek cities we know anything about—and certainly in the city we know most about, Athens.²² Plato simply made it compulsory and canonical. On the other hand, if we think of education as entailing more formal schooling in letters and mathematics, then again Plato's proposals for *compulsory* education for boys and girls might be seen as making public what was, as Aristotle noted, traditionally (in Athens and elsewhere) a private concern. There is no evidence, however, that such subjects were part of Spartan public education (which in any case was limited to an elite section of the population), but they were part of Athenian education (including to a certain extent the education of girls).²³

Rather than being inspired by Sparta, I suggest that Plato's educational program was a significant contributor to the utopian image of Sparta that developed in the postclassical era. Although Morrow (1960) was willing to allow some Spartan influence in the *Laws*, his observation on the term *agoge* (buried in a footnote) opens the door of doubt as to the direction of that influence. In modern discussions of ancient Sparta, *agoge* is the specific term used to denote the tough Spartan educational system, but Plato seems to have been the first to use the term in an educational sense—and he does not use it of Sparta. Early in Book 2, the Athenian offers a definition of *paideia* as “the process of drawing (*olke*) and guiding (*agoge*) children towards that principle which is pronounced right by the law and confirmed as truly right by the experience of the oldest and the most just” (659d). Morrow noted that no one of Plato's era or earlier, including Xenophon, uses the term in relation to Sparta.²⁴ By the time of Plutarch, however, *agoge* seems to have become attached to Sparta (see, for instance, the first chapter of *Agésilas*). With Morrow, we can ask: How much of this history of the word is due to the influence of the *Laws*? And how much of the Spartan educational mirage is due also to Plato's *Laws*—as well as Socrates' light-hearted joke in the *Protagoras* that philosophy has its ancient roots in Crete and Sparta! (342a).

In sum, Plato in the *Laws* constructs a model educational system, which, like the city's legislation as a whole, is built more directly on the institutions of Athens than of either

²² See Morrow 1960: 302. Morrow acknowledged that the Spartans showed an “early distinction” in choral art, but then “with the reorganization of Spartan life that occurred shortly after this period of flowering, leadership in the musical arts passed to other lands” (p. 304). In Plato's day, however, Athens may have been the more likely model for the education of children in choral performance and contests. According to Plutarch, there were in Sparta three festival choruses—one of old men, one of men in their prime, and one of boys. The three choruses remind one of the three choruses of *Laws* 664b–d. But which way did the influence go? For the usual view see Anton 2006: 269–72.

²³ See Dillon in this volume. On the representation of female musicians on Athenian vases, see Bundrick 2005.

²⁴ Morrow 1960: 302, n. 14 cited Sosibius (an early third-century antiquarian of Spartan origin who spent time in Alexandria) *apud* Athen. 674ab as the first use of the term in relation to Sparta. Sosibius' works on Spartan festivals and rituals are known only by title and fragments but seem to have been important for later historians of Sparta. Kennell 1995: 113–4 and Ducat 2006: 69–70 also noticed that *agoge* is not used of Spartan education in classical texts, but neither makes the connection with Plato.

Sparta or Crete. The Athenian's manner is gentle and sometimes playful, but the message is consistently critical of Spartan (and, to a lesser extent, Cretan) training of citizens, which, if he had been blunt, he would have said was not education (*paideia*) or indeed *agoge*, as he used the term, at all.

PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: PULLING TOGETHER WITH THE GOLDEN STRING OF COMMON LAW

Plato's educational program in the *Laws* is full of detail and cultural relevance; it is also built on a theory of moral psychology that merits at least a short comment here.²⁵ Although the *Laws*' discussion on this topic is not a deeply philosophical one such as one finds in other works, it is suited to the practical character of the dialogue's project and to the intellectual character of the Athenian's two companions. The discussion also gives Plato ("the Athenian") the opportunity, when his companions express difficulty in following the argument, to present his striking image of humans as puppets of the gods.

Plato introduces the image of humans as puppets of the gods toward the end of Book 1 in the midst of his disquisition on the educational benefits of a well-run drinking party (637b), provoked by his companions' reluctance to see the role of pleasure as well as pain in the training of virtuous citizens. Looking back, the *Laws* opens with the Athenian drawing his companions, the Spartan Megillus and the Cretan Clinias, into a discussion of the relation of city law to the inculcation of virtue—something he knows Clinias and Megillus think their cities understand and do very well. The Athenian mentions the Spartan common meals and physical training, to which Megillus adds hunting and then, speaking more expansively, "the hardy endurance of pain, by means both of manual contests and of robberies carried out every time at the risk of a sound drubbing" and the "so-called Krypteia . . . a wonderfully severe (*polyponos*) training in hardihood, as the men go bare-foot in winter and sleep without covers and have no attendants, but wait on themselves and rove through the whole countryside both by night and by day" (633b–c, Bury; on the Krypteia see further Kennell in this volume). "You speak well, my Spartan friend," says the Athenian (with some irony), "but is courage simply battling against fears and pains (*diamache pros phobous and lupas*)? Or is it also concerned with the proper management of desires and pleasures (*pothous te kai hedonas*)" (633c–d)? "Pleasure and pain," he says a little later, "flow like two springs released by nature. If a man draws the right amount from the right one at the right time, he lives a happy life; but if he draws unintelligently at the

²⁵ The topic has of course received many lengthy discussions. I offer here only my nonphilosophical two cents' worth. See Bobonich 2002 for one important recent discussion with a focus on the *Laws*.

wrong time, his life will be rather different" (636d, Saunders). Megillus accepts the point (or is unable to find an argument against it) but still insists that Spartan avoidance of pleasure, particularly the pleasure of wine, is praiseworthy and so (as we have seen) stimulates the Athenian to undertake an extended and leisurely argument for the educational value of experiencing pleasure in (well-run) drinking parties. The argument requires clarification of terms: within each one of us are two "witless and mutually antagonistic advisers" that we call pleasure and pain (644d); then, each of us has expectations about the future—the expectation of pain is fear and of pleasure is confidence; finally, we call "calculation" the process by which we judge the relative value of our options, and when the judgment is a public one we call it "law."

When Clinias has difficulty following the argument, the Athenian offers his image of the "puppet" to provide both visual clarification and expansion of the argument:

Let us suppose that each of us living beings is an ingenious puppet of the gods—whether contrived as a plaything (*paigion*) of theirs or for some serious purpose, we do not know. But this we do know, that these affections (*pathe*) in us, like sinews or cords, draw us along, and being contrary to each other, pull one against the other to contrary actions; and herein lies the dividing line between virtue and vice. For, as our argument declares, there is one of the pulling forces which each person ought always to follow and in no way abandon, thereby pulling against the other sinews; this is the golden and sacred pull of calculation (*ten tou logismou agogen*) called the common law of the city. The other cords are hard and iron and have every sort of shape, while this one is soft since it is of gold. With that finest pull (*agoge*) of the law we should always cooperate; for since calculation is fine, but gentle rather than forceful, its pull (*agoge*) needs helpers to assure that the golden kind within us may always vanquish the other kinds. (*Laws* 644d7–645b1, Bobonich 2002: 260–61)

The image, suggests the Athenian, will help bring clarity to the nature of education (*paideia*) and to the value of drinking parties.²⁶ Drinking parties first: here the Athenian encourages his companions to consider how in an inebriated state the soul's softened strings might be tuned and tested. Drink produces optimism and confidence and prompts a man to act without restraint: "he'll say and do anything without a qualm" (649b), so revealing the "nature and disposition of his soul" (650b) and allowing it to be treated by the art that Plato here calls *politike* (ibid.).²⁷ With Clinias' assent (*panu men oun*) Book 1 comes to an end.

What then is the relevance of the argument and the image to the education of children? First, I note the Athenian's comment that inebriation returns the soul to a child-like state (645e5–6), with an intensity of emotions, lack of self-control, and openness to

²⁶ It is not clear if Plato imagines women in these drinking parties—this would indeed be a major cultural innovation! Later in the legislative sections of the dialogue, the Athenian does insist on equal education for women, but here we are still in the preliminary stage of the discussion and most likely he imagines these parties as male only.

²⁷ For further discussion of the role played by shame in this educational experience of drunkenness, see Frede 2010.

education. Second, the pull of the golden string is termed the *agoge tou logismou*, which is also the law of the city. In addition it is an image of public education.

In Book 2, the Athenian begins anew his discussion of the education of children, with emphasis again on the role of pleasure and pain in shaping the child's character and with the image of puppet and its strings still vivid in his reader's mind. He carefully explains that "in children the first childish sensations are pleasure and pain, and it is in these first that goodness and badness come to the souls." So, he says, "education" (*paideia*) is "the first acquisition of virtue, when pleasure and love and pain and hatred spring up rightly in the souls of those who are unable as yet to grasp a rational account, etc." (653b). The golden string, it would seem, is still undeveloped, but a child's (other) strings can be exercised and tuned.²⁸ "Every young creature is incapable of keeping either its body or its tongue quiet, and is always striving to move and to cry, leaping and skipping and delighting in dances and games, and uttering noises of every description" (653d–e). At this point, the child needs to follow the pull of outside instruction: "Education," as we know, "is the drawing or pulling (*agoge*) of children to the right principles as enunciated by the law and confirmed by the experience of the oldest and most worthy" (660). Education, it seems, then, acts as the child's "golden string" before he or she has the rationality necessary for independent action. Further, "inasmuch as the souls of the young are unable to endure being serious, we give them play and songs," training them to enjoy pleasures in proper measure and manner. As they move through childhood into maturity, children in Plato's city receive, as we have seen, educational instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but music and dance continue to be essential parts both of their education and of the lifelong education of the city's citizens. The image of the puppet remains. With luck, the well-educated citizens of the Platonic city will pull together with the *agoge* of their golden string so that they might have the best chance at human happiness and virtue. So although Plato does not spell this out to Clinias and Megillus, we can look at the entire course of education in two ways: first as a matter of training the more rigid strings of affections or passions to pull us either toward or away from things that do or do not contribute to virtue and happiness; and second, as time goes on, as a matter of educating the more malleable and precious string of reason, by which one can reason why one action is better than another and can discover this in the complex and changing circumstances of life.

CODA: CONTINUING EDUCATION: HUMANS AS PLAYTHINGS OF THE GODS

Throughout his discussion of education in the *Laws*, Plato (or his Athenian) emphasizes the importance of play in games, music, and dance. Enjoyment of these arts is

²⁸ Cf. 808: "the child is the most unmanageable of all wild things—an unusually powerful spring of reason whose waters are not yet channeled" (Bury).

peculiarly human and a gift from the gods: "Whereas animals have no sense of order and disorder in movement, we human beings have been made sensitive to both and can enjoy them. This is the gift of the same gods whom we said were given to us as companions in dancing..." (653e–654a, Saunders). This is important. Plato's education program seeks to nurture what is distinctively human in the human soul, and this includes the enjoyment of music and dance, along with (ideally) the development of reasoning judgment.²⁹

Religious festivals, then, constitute the continuing education of the population, keeping the citizens in tune with the virtuous life as they honor the gods who gave them their arts. The image of humans as puppets of the gods, key to the moral psychology that underlies the possibility of moral education, returns in a different guise and with different emphasis in Book 7. Explaining to his companions that the best human life is a life led in peace and that education "that deserves the name" will focus not on human affairs and wars but on honoring the gods with sacrifice, song and dance, the Athenian avows:

I maintain that serious matters deserve our serious attention, but trivialities do not; that all men of good will should put God at the center of their thoughts; that man, as we said before, has been created as a plaything (*paignion*) for God. So every man and every woman should play this part and order their whole life accordingly, engaging in the best possible pastimes... (803, Saunders).

By following this course, says Plato, we will see that "our nurslings (*trophimoi*) win the gods' good will and live the life that their own nature demands, puppets that they are, mostly, and hardly real at all" (804b).

The paradox is that Plato's educational program is both rooted in his contemporary world and radically opposed to the values of that world. He writes with remarkable sympathy and attention to detail about the nurture and upbringing of children yet is skeptical of the seriousness of the political project as a whole. Perhaps that is just the point. From the perspective of the divine order of things, all human life is child's play, and the best life for humans is one of educated leisure—*paideia* and *paidia* together. Plato's *Laws* have a reputation, perhaps deserved, as a prescription for an authoritarian regime without personal choice or freedom. But in his educational program, Plato's goal is happiness for the city as a whole—to the extent that this is possible in the human realm. He was highly skeptical of the idea that happiness requires the radical sort of individual liberty that he saw as the hallmark of democracy, but perhaps even more skeptical that there could be happiness in a state regimented by fear and pain in preparation for war.

²⁹ Current research suggests that Plato may be largely correct. Despite stories of dancing dogs, elephant orchestras, and so on, true entrainment of bodily movement to music has so far been confirmed only in certain cockatoos, apart, of course, from humans, for whom this comes naturally. See Patel et al. 2009.

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CHAPTER 19

BOYS, GIRLS, FAMILY, AND THE STATE AT SPARTA

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INTRODUCTION

FROM the time of Fr. Joseph Lafitau's account of Amerindian customs in early eighteenth-century Canada (Lafitau 1724), children and their upbringing have been at the center of the modern conception of ancient Sparta. Our understanding of the Spartan experience of childhood is consequently framed almost exclusively in terms of the well-known Spartan citizen training system, popularly known as the *agoge*, which was in antiquity and remains today the paradigm of an oppressive, brutalizing, and totalitarian program of indoctrination, whose sole purpose was to make boys into efficient, obedient soldiers for the city's war machine. Girls were also trained in various athletic disciplines as well as choral dancing so they too might play their part, by giving birth to real men (Pomeroy 2002: 4). Evaluating these images is particularly difficult because classical Sparta produced no writers of its own and very few surviving epigraphical texts before the Roman period. Thucydides himself complained about Spartan secretiveness (5.68.2, 5.74.3). To fill this void, non-Spartan philosophers, essayists, historians, and biographers have imagined over the millennia a city whose laws and customs fostered a society of discipline and harmony, where everything was shared among the citizens, from land to wives—a veritable utopia or dystopia according to one's predilections. The product of this process, often called the “Spartan mirage,” is responsible for images of Sparta in the modern popular, and often academic, imaginations.

Since the classical training system constituted such an important part of the mirage, debate has centered in recent years not only on the system's modalities but also on the reliability of the ancient evidence itself (Kennell 1995; Ducat 2006). For the training system of the classical period, the first four chapters of Xenophon's treatise *On the Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* take pride of place, while Plutarch, though writing

many centuries later in the Roman period, transmits much information of widely varying value from earlier non-Spartan writers on the city's institutions and mores in his *Life* of the (mythical) Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus. Aristotle in Book 8 of the *Politics* makes some statements about the overall cast of Spartan training. The lost *Constitution* of the Aristotelian school, one of Plutarch's main sources for his *Lycurgus*, probably went into greater detail, although its epitome contains nothing about training beyond an outline that had become traditional by the Hellenistic period (Rose F611.13). Plato's works, especially the *Laws*, contain several references to Spartan practices, but in an allusive manner devoid of specifics (see Patterson in this volume). Epigraphical evidence for the classical period is confined to a single laconic victory dedication, probably from the early fourth century (Woodward 1929: 296–7, no. 1). Evidence from the Hellenistic period is essentially nonexistent, especially if we discount the material found in the so-called *Laconian Institutions*, which is part of the Plutarchean corpus and whose Hellenistic authorship is disputed (Kennell 1995: 20–3; Ducat 2006: 29–32). In addition to Plutarch, Roman-era sources include the travel writer Pausanias (3.14.8, 16.9–11, 20.2, 20.8) and the satirist Lucian (*Anacharsis*), who both describe contests in the *agoge* of their own time. Most important, however, are the inscriptions, dating from the later first century CE onward, that were found at the shrine of the training system's patron deity, Artemis Orthia, and provide a wealth of detail about its later form (Woodward 1929: 297–374, nos. 2–169).

The controversy hinges on the relevance of the later sources, overwhelmingly from the Roman period, to the earlier citizen training system. For if the Spartan civic training system had a continuous history from its beginning, probably in the sixth century BCE, to its end sometime after the 330s CE (Liban. *Or.* 1.23), the later evidence would reflect a living Spartan tradition and could then be used cautiously to reconstruct the system's structure and functioning in previous centuries (Ducat 2006: x–xi). On the other hand, if, as I believe, the Spartan training system ceased to function twice, in the third and second centuries BCE, for a period of several decades each time, this evidence reflects a Roman-era system that was actually a collection of invented traditions designed to project an image of Sparta as essentially unchanged from the archaic period (Kennell 1995: 9–12), and its utility for understanding the classical training system is significantly reduced.

THE CLASSICAL TRAINING SYSTEM: FACT AND FICTION

Despite the difficulties, we can still comprehend some characteristics of the system as it functioned in the later fifth and early fourth centuries BCE, when Sparta's power was at its height. Scrutiny and competition were the twin pillars of Spartan life. According to Plutarch, a Spartan would have encountered both very early in life, for the decision to

raise an infant lay not with family members but with tribal elders, who first examined its body for any signs of physical defect. If none were found, the baby could be raised and assigned one of the nine thousand equal lots of land from which a Spartan citizen drew his livelihood; otherwise, the child was to be abandoned on the rocky Apothetai area of Mount Taygetos (*Lyc.* 16.1–2). The callous, officious brutality of this custom—admired naturally by Adolf Hitler—conforms to our modern perception of Sparta as a proto-totalitarian state, but it is almost certainly a myth (Ducat 2006: 28). Not only is it bound up with the assigning of *kleroi*, which were an invention of the Hellenistic king Cleomenes III, but also Plutarch is the earliest source to associate it with Sparta. All earlier texts containing descriptions of similar eugenic practices belong to ahistorical accounts of utopian societies and do not distinguish between the sexes of infants being tested (Huys 1996: 59–74). Nor indeed does Plutarch's, apart from his reference to *kleroi*, which requires the newborn (*to gennethen*) be male. The indications are that Plutarch or perhaps a Cynic predecessor adapted a utopian topos to fit his portrayal of Sparta. And then there is the case of King Agesilaos II, not the heir apparent and so obliged to enter the training system, in which he performed outstandingly despite being congenitally lame in one leg (Plut. *Ages.* 1.2–4, 2.2–3). His survival alone is enough to call the historicity of the infants' scrutiny into serious question (see also Evans Grubbs in this volume).

If childhood is defined juridically as the time span before individuals attain status as full adults, then that of Spartan males was extraordinarily long from a modern, Western perspective. Formal schooling usually began at seven years of age for Greek boys, and Spartans were no exception. The next twenty-four years, however, they spent in the state-run citizen training system, at first grouped together into companies (*ilai*) and passing through three broadly defined age grades: children (*paides*), from seven to approximately fourteen years of age; youths (*paidiskoi*), from fourteen to about twenty; and young men (*hebontes*), from age twenty when they first entered the army as subordinate soldiers to about thirty when they became full adult citizens (*Spartiatai*). The boys in each company of *paides* and *paidiskoi* were under the leadership of the most talented of their number, whose duty was to distribute the modest amount of food allotted his charges (Xen. *LC* 2.5–6). Although young men in other Greek cities also did not enjoy all the privileges and rights of citizens until they reached the age of thirty, only Spartan *hebontes* remained during that time at least partially under the jurisdiction of a civic official, the child manager (*paidonomos*), whose remit was the supervision of all underage Spartans (Xen. *LC* 2.2, 10). This single post made the Spartan system unique for its time and elicited Aristotle's approval for involving the state in education (Arist. *Pol.* 1337a). The *paidonomos* gathered the boys, probably for exercise and almost certainly for contests at Orthia's sanctuary. He also punished infractions of the rules by means of whip-bearers (*mastigophoroi*) drawn from the *hebontes* grade.

During their years as *paides* and *paidiskoi*, the boys were subject to a training regimen that became increasingly strenuous. We are told that whatever the season or weather conditions, they were allowed only one piece of outer clothing; they were required to

go without footwear and, upon becoming *paidiskoi*, at certain times to make their beds by pulling up with their own hands the rushes growing along the banks of the Eurotas river, which flows just east of the city (Plut. *Lyc.* 16.13). There was also a strict code of correct behavior: each young Spartiate-in-training was expected to keep his hands in his robe while in public, to walk without talking, to keep his eyes always on the ground, and never to stare (Xen. *LC* 3.4). The aim of all this constant supervision was to render the boys more modest and prepared for a life in a highly competitive society under the unrelenting, appraising gaze of magistrates, relatives, lovers, and rivals. Physical segregation does not seem to have been a characteristic of the classical system, for Xenophon's young Spartans are represented as being the concern of the whole city, gathering for contests and exercise under the supervision of magistrates and being taught how to act within society.

Surprisingly in this context, Xenophon gives a prominent place to the role of theft. Boys were provided with inadequate sustenance so that they would be compelled to steal certain food items allowed by law to make up the difference (Xen. *LC* 2.7-8). If caught, young Spartans were whipped for being careless thieves (Kennell 1995: 122-3; Hodkinson 2000: 204-5; Ducat 2006: 201-7). Stealing was also central to an early version of what was to become in later centuries the best known component of the *agoge*, the (in)famous whipping contest near the temple of Artemis Orthia. In the classical ceremony, one group of youths attempted to seize cheeses lying on top of the altar just east of the temple while another group fought them off. Those who presumably carried off the most dairy products were those who after a short period of suffering "rejoiced in being honored for a long time" (Xen. *LC* 2.9). In the substantially transformed ritual of the Roman period, victors received the title "altar victor" for stoically enduring a whipping the longest and the right to erect a bronze statue of themselves, but what sort of honors their fourth-century counterparts enjoyed is unknown. The practice of stealing foodstuffs, so apparently out of character for the disciplined Spartans of modern imagination, has been convincingly revealed as an expression of the Homeric ethos of Spartan society, a society that was in its way in a state of continual warfare akin to Mao's Perpetual Revolution and an ethos that also motivated the annual declaration of war against the helots, as a justification for taking half of their produce as tribute (Link 2004). The violence of the ritual at Artemis' altar was characteristic of the system as a whole and was well-known outside Sparta. Plato characterized the cheese-stealing contest as "certain snatchings amid many blows" and mentioned "hand-to-hand battles" among Spartan youths (*Leg.* 1.663b). For his part, Aristotle criticized Spartans for their reliance on brutality in the upbringing, which produced "animalistic" men who, like wolves and other beasts, were ill equipped to face the noble risk (*Pol.* 8.8.5).

Although no specific details of other classical-period contests are known, their successors in the Roman age were competitions in singing, dancing, and hunting calls (Kennell 1995: 48-69). Since Spartans were renowned from their earliest history for choral singing and dancing (Alcm. F1 *PMGF*), with the latter considered especially suitable for military training as it conduced to marching in step, we may reasonably assume

that similar contests existed earlier as well. The famous *trichoria*, sometimes assigned to the *Gymnopaideia* (Plut. *Lyc.* 21.3; Ducat 2006, 268–71), Sparta's most famous religious festival, also exemplifies the role of the chorus in citizen training and the city's dominant ethos (Kennell 1995: 68–9). In this ceremony, three age-based choruses sang short songs in which the oldest recalled their former martial prowess, the group in the middle boasted of their present valor, and the youngest claimed they would be braver still. The chorus of future warriors would have been composed of underage Spartans, and their song reflects the competitiveness, both individual and collective, which the training system was drilling into them.

HEBONTES

Competition between individuals was not confined to formal contests. The annual selection of three hundred *hebontes* to serve in the elite royal bodyguard, who despite being called horsemen (*hippeis*) served as infantrymen, provided a very public arena for praise and shame, since the selectors openly stated their reasons for choosing some and rejecting others. Those not picked then kept a careful watch on their successful age-mates in hopes of catching them in behavior unbecoming Spartiate gentlemen (Xen. *LC* 4.3–4). In addition, rivalry among *hebontes*, if we believe Xenophon, commonly led to punch-ups whenever two happened to meet, fights that any full Spartiate was empowered to stop, with the ephors meting out severe punishment for disobedience (*LC* 4.6). The tension between two powerful tendencies in Spartan society—fierce rivalry and stern supervision—also figures in reports of injuries and even accidental death resulting from fights between young, armed Spartans (Xen. *Anab.* 4.8.25; [Plut.] *Mor.* 233f–234a).

The weapon inflicting such wounds was the sickle, an instrument with powerful associations for Spartiates-to-be. From the dedication by Arexippos of five sickles as a conspicuous memorial of his victories at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia to the many inscriptions erected in the high imperial period, sickles were the proper offerings to the goddess for success in contests of youths. Young Spartan males evidently carried sickles around with them, foreshadowing their future duty to ravage enemy crops and symbolizing, through the sickle's mythical association with young men on the threshold of adulthood such as Kronos and Perseus, their current role as Spartiates-to-be. As Ducat notes, the possibility that boys might in the heat of the moment use these sharp instruments as weapons would account for Spartans' close surveillance of their behavior (Ducat 2006: 210–4). Sickles can also be linked to male maturation rituals, since Kronos used his adamantine sickle to castrate his father Ouranos and Perseus wielded his to kill the female monster Medusa.

Artemis was one of the most common kourotrophic deities in Greece, so it is no surprise to find her in this role at Sparta. What rituals, apart from the contests, were performed at her sanctuary is unknown, but a remarkably large series (estimated at

over six hundred complete examples) of terracotta representations of masks dating to between the middle of the seventh and the first decades of the sixth century BCE may provide some clues. It has been suggested that a set of similar terracotta masks from the Geometric period found at Tiryns were employed along with sickles in a sort of ritual drama wherein youths coming of age were required to combat grotesque female figures to symbolize their leaving the female-dominated household to take up their role as young warriors (Langdon 2007: 174–5). It is possible that the Spartan masks had a broadly similar function. The types identified at Sparta—youth, bearded adult, and various sorts of demon (Carter 1987)—can be made to fit nicely into the framework of a dramatic representation of a young Spartan's passage from child to adult with suitably frightening images of what lurks, misshapen and incomplete, outside the boundaries of society to be combated with a sickle. However, in the absence of more archeological or literary evidence, such a reconstruction must remain at the very least speculative.

The decade between twenty and thirty years of age was a time of final transition for the *hebontes*. Now a young Spartan entered a common mess as a full member, was enrolled in the army, and became eligible for selection to the corps of *hippeis*, who alone of their age group were permanently on duty and required to sleep in barracks every night (Ducat 2006: 103–4). As mentioned already, Xenophon stresses that rivalry intensified at this stage and was particularly manifest when successful candidates to the *hippeis* were announced. The *hebontes'* ambiguous status between child and adult can be seen in the rules governing fighting between them. *Hebontes* who ignored a command to stop were arrested by the *paidonomos*, who disciplined children, but punished by the ephors, who disciplined Spartiates (Xen. *LC* 3.6). *Hebontes* also suffered from other disabilities that advertised their incomplete nature: they were unable to hold civic office and were barred from entering the agora to engage in commercial transactions, which were effected by their relatives and lovers (*erastai*) (Plut. *Lyc.* 25.1; Ducat 2006: 101–12). Like children, *hebontes* were excluded from the two important activities of buying and selling, which Hodkinson (2000: 180) argued were integral to Spartan citizenship. On the other hand, they constituted the first ten military classes (*ta deka aph' hebes*) of the Spartan army and were employed as shock troops in battle (e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.32; Ages. 1.31.6). They were also probably able to marry and beget children, although the usual custom was for males to marry at about thirty (Ducat 2006: 108–9; contra Lupi 2000: 114).

The best-known facet of the *hebontes* grade was their participation in a mysterious activity called the Krypteia, on which our few useful sources diverge in several important ways. Plato (*Leg.* 633b–c) simply refers to it as an extraordinarily severe type of training, with each participant left to his own devices, wandering all over the country in winter without shoes, bedding, or slaves. Aristotle, as channeled through Herakleides' epitome (Fr. 611, 10 Rose) and Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* (28.1–7), has the young men sent out into the countryside, probably by the ephors, without any specific purpose but armed and with some food. Hiding by day, they descend to the roads at night and knife any helot they encounter. The late scholion on the *Laws* builds on Plato's description of the Krypteia as a solitary affair. The young man in the Krypteia spends a year in the

mountains, naked, under orders to survive by stealing or whatever else he can do, always in secret, to avoid being caught and punished.

Scholars have long been perplexed by this institution, with some recent works attempting to solve the problem by positing the existence of two distinct activities: a traditional withdrawal from society that all youths underwent (the *Krypteia* proper); and a period of police duty in which only the most intelligent went out into the countryside to terrorize the helot population, armed with daggers and a license to kill potential troublemakers (Lévy 1988; Kennell 1995: 131–2). More recently, in his study of Spartan education, Ducat (2006: 281–329) argued that these contradictions can be traced to two different ancient traditions about the *Krypteia*: one, exemplified by the passage in Plato, sympathetic to Sparta; the other, followed by Aristotle, hostile. In fact, the *Krypteia* involved only a select few, who, deprived of the accoutrements of city life, endured an initiatory period of wandering isolation during which they carried out probatory killings of helots on behalf of their entire age group. This type of ritual activity is known from several traditional societies, where killing a man is the prerequisite for entering the class of adults. Ducat's view (2006: 296–7) that only the *hippeis* were eligible for the *Krypteia* and that the special agents called doers of good (*agathoergoi*) were drawn from those who had passed through the *Krypteia*, must be wrong, however. Aristotle mentions only intelligence as the prerequisite for those sent on the *Krypteia*, while the qualities *hippeis* needed must have included physical strength and courage as well. Herodotus (1.67.5), our sole source on the qualifications of the *agathoergoi*, says only that they had to be the eldest of those leaving the *hippeis* each year. The *Krypteia* is better understood as a distinct institution, perhaps not so prestigious as the *hippeis* but whose selection for special commando units was another avenue for the striving after status and honor that formed the basis of Spartan education and society as a whole.

SPARTAN GIRLS

Alongside the upbringing of males, female training, especially physical, has a special place in the Spartan mirage. From Xenophon's few words of description (*LC* 1.4) in the fourth century, through Plutarch's more elaborate account (*Lyc.* 14) in the Roman period, down to the present day (Pomeroy 2002: 12–9), the idea that Spartan girls trained in much the same manner as boys has persisted. That girls participated in “athletic” activity in classical Sparta cannot be denied—Plato (*Leg.* 805d) mentions girls living a life of exercise and music—but it is highly unlikely, actually impossible, that they underwent a training system anything like that of their brothers and cousins. Plutarch's evidence can be dismissed easily, for his catalog of athletic disciplines in which Lycurgus caused Spartan maidens to be trained—racing, wrestling, discus and javelin throwing (all the events of the pentathlon except the long jump)—are an elaboration of Xenophon's vague reference to racing and contests of strength that is heavily influenced by the increased profile of females in athletics in the Roman period (e.g., *SIG*³ 802; Mantas 1995). Another

topos that Spartan girls exercised alongside boys stems from a tendency in Athenian writers during and after the Peloponnesian war to present Spartan habits as diametrically opposed to Athenian, and by extension Greek norms (Millender 1999). Euripides makes use of the physically conditioned, sexually and socially liberated Spartan woman for titillation masquerading as shock in his *Andromache* (595–600), when Peleus catalogs the sins of Spartan females: “No Spartan girl could be chaste even if she wanted to, when they desert their homes and with naked thighs and fluttering clothes go to race courses and co-ed (*koinas*) wrestling grounds. Unbearable!” In Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (77–84), Lampito’s California-style beauty, attractive to men and women alike, was due to her strenuous un-Athenian workouts. Much later, the Roman poet Propertius (3.14) took up this tradition for explicit erotic effect in verse that satirically juxtaposed the Romans’ belief in their supposed Spartan ancestry and their very different sexual attitudes: Rome would be so much better if the old Spartan ways actually were adopted, like free access to all women and mixed, nude wrestling. Deviant yet so compelling, Spartan girls with their flashing thighs (*phaineromerides*: Ibycus F 58 Page) have attracted the literal and figurative gaze of males for centuries.

Putting aside these fevered creations, the remaining evidence for the classical period is consistent. In conformity with Greek custom as exemplified in the mythic Atalanta’s career as athlete and adventurer, which abruptly ended after her union with Hippomenes, female athletic activity at Sparta was confined to the years before marriage. Xenophon (*LC* 1.4) presents the contests of strength and footraces for females, as well as for males, as ordained by Lycurgus to prepare girls for the civic duty of child-bearing. Of his two sorts of exercise, racing presents little problem. Several well-known Laconian figurines depict running girls with muscular thighs in short chitons (Kaltsas 2006: 166 no. 69) and ritual races linked to fertility and female maturation rituals are not unknown outside Sparta (Parker 2005: 243–4; Ducat 2006: 231–4). The contests of strength are more mysterious. Ducat (p. 229) recently proposed that Xenophon is most probably alluding to wrestling, another activity for which Atalanta was renowned. His evidence is four mirror handles from the later sixth century depicting young, pubescent, athletic girls (“conforming in all respects to the canons of Nabokov”), whom Ducat identified as female wrestlers because they wear triangular trunks similar to those worn by Atalanta when she is shown wrestling Peleus in vase paintings (e.g., CVA Munich [9] 36 pl. 28). As Ducat made clear, the handles are not of Laconian origin but use a “model probably of Spartan origin.” This would not necessarily present a significant obstacle were it not for the existence of ten mirror handles and four statuettes, all made in Laconia and all depicting naked girls (Pipili 1987: 77–8, nos. 216–20; Keene Congdon 1981: 127–34, 137, 143, 147; pl. nos. 2, 5–8, 10, 11, 15, 23, 28). In contrast to the imitation handles made elsewhere, none of the mirror handles securely assigned to Laconian workshops depicts girls wearing clothing. Some of the Laconian girls have a sort of baldric hanging from one shoulder to the opposite hip on which hang crescent-shaped objects that have been identified as sickles despite the very male associations of those tools (Scanlon 2002: 130). A couple of them carry objects, probably cymbals, in their hands; one may be conducting a chorus; and a fourth plays the flute, which points to a musical

rather than a strictly athletic context for female nudity. According to Plutarch, Spartan girls customarily paraded and sang and danced at sacrifices in the nude, in the presence and sight of young men (*Lyc.* 14.4). Alcman's *Partheneion* confirms that the tradition of girls singing and dancing goes back to the seventh century, though the poet apparently depicted the chorus members as clothed (F1 lines 64–68 *PMGF*).

A better candidate for a contest of strength is an unusual event called the *bibasis*, described by two late authors, the lexicographer Pollux (4.102) and the medical compiler Oribasius (*Coll. Med.* 6.31.1–3). The *bibasis* was an event for both boys and girls that involved jumping in place with the knees bent so that the heels came in contact with the buttocks, first alternating between each leg and then with both legs together. *Bibasis* scenes have been identified on archaic pots from Corinth and Athens (Robertson 1977), though they do not correspond completely to the literary evidence. At Sparta there were properly constituted contests (*athla*), and the epigram in the Laconian dialect preserved by Pollux that records a girl's feat in jumping may come from a victory dedication. It was also familiar to Athenian audiences as a typically Spartan activity: Aristophanes (*Lys.* 82) has Spartan Lampito attribute her impressive physique to exercise and "jumping to the buttocks," though she was a married woman and in the real world would no longer have been quite so active.

Running, singing, and dancing in choruses and the *bibasis* are all that we can confidently ascribe to female "training" in the classical period, though there may have been other activities now hidden from us. Of these, only the *bibasis* for girls seems peculiar to Sparta, since all the others have parallels elsewhere in Greece. Even the Spartan girls' nudity is not unique, for well-brought-up young Athenian girls also took their robes off at the Brauronia festival in eastern Attica to signify the end of their time as "little bears" (*arktoi*) in service to Artemis (Ar. *Lys.* 645; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 133; see also Garland in this volume) and engaged in a ritual involving running that is depicted on vases (*krateriskoi*) discovered at the site of the goddess's sanctuary (Scanlon 2002: 139–74; Parker 2005: 244–5; see also Oakley in this volume).

Many of the rituals and ceremonies for Spartan girls were probably held at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. For what they are worth, several passages of poetry refer to Spartan girls exercising beside the Eurotas river (Ar. *Lys.* 1308–13; Theocr. 18.39; Cic. *Tusc.* 2.15.16). Still, the goddess's supervision over the stages of women's lives is more securely suggested by the miniature representations of carding combs, numerous female figurines, pins, and fibulae that are among the lead votives deposited in the cold ash of Artemis' altar in the seventh and sixth centuries (Boss 2000: 81–101, 119–26). Herein may lie the peculiarity of Sparta, for although the Athenian Brauronia was a public festival attended by many, the sanctuary where the little bears' ritual disrobing occurred was far off in the country, well away from the city. Artemis Orthia, on the other hand, had her temple in the oldest area of Spartan settlement, in the community of Limnai at the edge of, but within, the agglomeration of villages that comprised the classical city. Seen in their choruses and dances, Spartan girls exhibited a sort of civic nudity that was akin to that of boys and would have accustomed them to the public gaze in a similar way. As the epigram on winning in the *bibasis* shows, open competition was also an element in

their upbringing. Beyond this, girls had a formal part to play in promoting competition for honor among boys. According to Plutarch, girls from time to time publicly blamed youths for some fault or praised those they thought worthy in specially composed songs (*Lyc.* 14.5). Other factors surely contributed to the forthrightness of Spartan women—their privileged economic status, for instance—but these activities, along with the *bibasis* and public footraces, would have helped to ready girls for an adult life lived more in the open than customary elsewhere (Ducat 2006: 245).

SPARTAN TRAINING AND FAMILY LIFE

I have deliberately avoided referring to what is commonly understood to be the classical Spartan citizen training system, by which I mean the grouping of boys in *ilai* and age grades, the contests at the shrine of Artemis Orthia, the organized fights and similar activities, as “education,” because none of the extant evidence hints that they constituted a complete educational program by themselves. The teaching of literacy was almost certainly not a concern of the state system. Not only do Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle omit to mention a practice that would have made Sparta truly unique among contemporary Greek cities, but also neither do any of the later sources for the Spartan mirage from the *Laconian Apophthegms* to Plutarch himself. The Athenian *ephebeia*, introduced in the fourth century, probably in imitation of the Spartan system, also focused entirely on military and athletic training ([Arist.] *AP* 42.3). Elsewhere, in the Hellenistic period, only occasionally and nearly always upon the private initiative of individual officials, were citizens-in-training exposed to instruction in literary, historical, or philosophical studies. In the two known cases where anything resembling a public educational system was established, Miletus (*SIG*² 577) and Teos (*SIG*² 578), funding was provided by huge private foundations. As Ducat (2006: 133) also pointed out, classical Sparta lacked the public financial resources to provide salaries for state-employed teachers.

This is not to say that the Spartan training system contained no educational elements, broadly speaking. But those elements had an emphatically social nature to them. The songs and dances of the choruses acculturated boys to Spartan values, as did their visits to the common messes with their attendant questioning by the adult members (*Xen. LC* 3.4). Correct behavior was certainly taught as well as brevity in speech and the particularly archaic ability to mock and be mocked tastefully (Arist. *F611.13* Rose). Moreover, the Spartans were certainly not the illiterate boors of the Athenian imagination (Millender 2001). The liberal arts were definitely not part of the training system, but Hippias of Elis was a frequent visitor and lecturer. In Plato’s *Hippias Major*, however, Hippias is made to complain that Spartans were unwilling to consider his educational reforms or to listen to him expound on trendy subjects like logic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, or even rhetoric, preferring instead mythological and historical genealogies and the foundations of cities—in other words, ancient history (285b–d). As for literacy, Plutarch states that the Spartans learned their letters because of their usefulness (*Lyc.*

16.10; Ducat 2006: 119). In the absence of any contrary evidence, it is most likely that these particular lessons took place outside the state-run system.

Although no ancient author explicitly affirms or denies that Spartans learned their letters privately, the admittedly scanty and selective evidence consistently represents Spartan family life as otherwise conforming to Greek norms. King Agasikles, upon being asked how he could walk around without a bodyguard, is represented as attributing it to his ruling of citizens the way a father rules his sons (Plut. *Mor.* 208a), presumably with kind sternness. Agesilaos, when playfully riding a reed like a horse with his children, told a surprised friend to make no comment until he had children of his own (*Mor.* 213e). Another saying attributed to Agasikles goes further in implying Spartan fathers had a role in instructing their sons. In reply to someone who wondered why he did not receive a sophist, Agasikles replied that he wished to be the pupil only of men whose son he also wished to be (*Mor.* 208a). Here a Spartan voices the typically Greek ideal of a virtuous father being his sons' best teacher. The most explicit statement comes in the *Hippias Major* when Socrates mocks the sophist's pretensions as an educator by opining that according to Hippias' own logic it would be more lawful for the sons of Spartans to be educated by him than by their own fathers (285a). While these passages may not reflect genuine Spartan practices, they show that the Spartan mirage in general represented Spartan family life as essentially the same as that of other Greeks.

The greatest obstacle to viewing Spartan family life as anywhere near normal must be the common idea that boys left their families at seven years of age to live exclusively with their age-mates and sleep in communal barracks. From young boys' enrollment in what he called *agelai* (herds)—the *ilai* of Xenophon—Plutarch drew the conclusion that no one was permitted to raise his son as he wished (*Lyc.* 6.7), which would have been a radical infringement on parental rights. But, as Ducat (2006) argued, it is not credible that boys so young were completely cut off from their families and spent their nights in barracks, since neither Xenophon nor even Plutarch mentions it (p. 125). Moreover, Plutarch's implication that boys older than twelve habitually slept together in the open air on reed beds is an example of his systematization of what was probably only an intermittent activity confined to certain limited periods of time. The idea that young boys were snatched from their families to be raised by the state has persisted because it conforms so well to the concept of a totalitarian Sparta. In fact, a long-known inscription provides unequivocal evidence to the contrary. A stele erected on Sparta's acropolis around 440 BCE lists the victories in chariot racing and athletic events in festivals in the city and throughout Laconia of a Spartan aristocrat Damonon and his son Enymakratidas (*IG* V.1 213). Of particular interest are their victories in the athletic age category *pais*, which usually spanned the ages twelve to twenty, in festivals held outside the city. The locations of some festivals were a considerable distance away and would have required lengthy trips for any Spartan participants, for example, the games at Thuria in Messenia or the Parparonia in the Thyreatis valley at the northern end of Mount Parnon. Just traveling to the games at the shrine of Apollo Lithesios on the Malea peninsula would probably have taken over three days, based on the time Col. William Leake spent traveling from Sparta to Monemvasia in the early nineteenth century (Leake 1830: 120–6). Participation in

the Lithesia and the return journey would have meant that young Damonon and, later, Enymakratidas would have spent at least a week outside Sparta, beyond the reach of the *paidonomos* and not engaging in any activities of the training system. That Spartan boys had so much free time requires that the conception of the classical training system as a monolithic, all-encompassing program be jettisoned. Only part, albeit probably a significant part, of a young Spartan's time was spent in the training system, with its contests and rituals, its companies and communal eating.

Thus, within the private context of the family, fathers had an important role in raising their sons; in the public, civic context of the training system they played a part as well. In the second chapter of the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, Xenophon carefully lays out its hierarchy of command. At the top was the *paidonomos* with supreme disciplinary power, as mentioned above. In his absence, a Spartiate would be picked in an ad hoc capacity who, like the civic official, could order the boys to do whatever he thought appropriate and might chastise misbehavior. In the absence of an adult, boys were to obey one of their fellows chosen from among the "sharpest" so that they would never be without supervision. The adult with disciplinary power appears again at the beginning of Xenophon's well-known description of the Spartan custom of sharing responsibility and possessions, where he repeats his assertion that each Spartiate was in charge of his own and all others' children (LC 6.1–2). That Xenophon was not simply referring to random occurrences whenever an adult happened upon one or more boys misbehaving is clear from his statement that the father who supervised the boys (*hon autos archei*) would be encouraged to treat all equally by the presence of other fathers (Lipka 2002: 160). As with so much of the training system, how fathers supervised these boys is impossible to recover, but that they might control groups of boys recalls a similar practice among the Cretans, where the father of the youth who gathered together a band (*agele*) was for the most part its commander, leading it out for hunting and racing, and punishing disobedience (Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 149). A similar program of activities would not be impossible at Sparta.

Family life was not effaced by Spartan citizen training. On the contrary, the family was vital for its proper functioning. Xenophon's account of the shared responsibility for disciplining boys exemplifies this. A boy foolish enough to admit to his father that he had been beaten for some infraction could expect another at his hands, for it was dishonorable for his father not to inflict a second punishment. He may have received his first beating from the *paidonomos*, the Spartiate replacement, or even the leader of his *ile*. In these cases, public chastisement had to be matched by private punishment as if the first was not considered sufficient, thereby showing that the Spartans considered fathers to be the ultimate arbiters of their sons' behavior, not the state.

Another means of socialization, this time definitely outside family life, was pederasty, whose sexual component Xenophon so disingenuously denied (LC 2.13) and which also necessitated some degree of privacy away from the prying eyes of boys and adult officials. Although not institutionalized in the training system, the relationship between an older man, usually a *hebon*, and a boy of the *paidiskos* grade was significant as a vehicle of maturation, as the *erastes* (lover) introduced his younger *eromenos* (beloved) into

adult male society through visits to his common mess (*syssition*) and supervision of the youth's behavior (Xen. *LC* 3.5). In fact, the *erastes*, as a sort of surrogate father, facilitated a young Spartan's gradual separation from the orbit of his family in preparation for taking his place as a Spartiate, attached to a common mess and paying his monthly dues. As we have seen, this relationship must have continued in some form or other even when the *eromenos* was in his twenties, when he could not yet engage in commercial transactions and would likely be initiating a sexual partnership as an *erastes* himself. Participation in a pederastic relationship was probably not required by law but, to draw a parallel with the (admittedly institutionalized) pederastic practices on Crete (*FGrHist* 70 149.21), the social stigma surely attached to being unable to find a willing partner of suitable status and reputation would have made it effectively compulsory for either *erastes* or *eromenos* (Ducat 2006: 164–8). Using two case studies, Cartledge (2001) revealed the political and social advantages to be gained through the judicious selection of a sexual partner in such a relationship.

CONCLUSION

There is both more and less to Spartan training in the classical period than the traditional picture might indicate. Some of the best-known elements of that picture have to be abandoned, including state examination of newborns, the boys' compulsory sleeping in barracks and beds of reeds, and an elaborate program of physical training for girls. In their place, we now observe that the training allowed boys to spend time with their families or even to travel outside the city. The *ilai* are revealed as only one focus of a boy's life. The contests in which they competed are best understood in their proper context of civic/religious contests punctuating the year that required the boys act or dress in certain ways during their course. Girls' upbringing was distinguished not by strenuous exercise in athletic disciplines normally reserved for males but by their very public participation in traditional female rituals and ceremonies that integrated them into Spartan society.

On the other hand, the civic training of young boys and girls was woven much more tightly into the fabric of Spartan private life than is usually appreciated. Fathers, not the state, brought up their own sons. At times, they might become involved directly with the civic training of their own and others' offspring when, in the absence of the *paidonomos*, they took on the role of an *ile's* leader. They observed the behavior of all young male Spartans in the streets and at play (we can now see that they had time to play) and could punish any wrongdoer, though the boy's ultimate punishment came from his own father. Fathers no doubt felt pride in their sons' success in civic contests, and like Arexippos, sometimes set up tangible memorials (Ducat 2006: 126). For their part, girls were brought up to be physically and emotionally confident, not only through participation in their own competitions and ceremonies but also by being involved in the boys' training.

By the time Plutarch composed his influential description of Lycurgus' laws for educating Spartans, a long tradition of writers after Xenophon had elaborated

actual practices, invented new ones and presented many Spartan customs and habits associated with raising children as codified into law. The Spartans themselves had contributed greatly to this process of reinvention, when in 146 BCE they received permission from the Romans to reinstate their system of citizen training after four decades of forced adherence to an Achaean League model (Kennell 1995: 7–11, 2008: 229; contra Lévy 1997: 153; Ducat 2006: xi). While inscriptions from the Roman period largely support Plutarch, they are themselves products of the Spartans' conscious attempt to represent their city as a living repository of the ancient way of life, most obviously through the use of an anachronistic pastiche of the old Laconian dialect on victory dedications at Artemis' shrine. The "Laconian customs" of Roman Sparta may have been an astonishingly successful example of constructed memory, but at heart they were a standard, if lengthy, Greek ephebate with archaizing embellishment (Kennell 1995: 70–97). The classical training system, on the other hand, had been fully integrated into the Spartan way of life (*agoge/diaita*). When the classical system's complex web of interconnections with the daily life of Spartans was ruptured as a consequence of the loss of Messenia in 369 BCE, followed by Sparta's subsequent decline and transformation into a typical Hellenistic polis, its decay was inevitable.

SUGGESTED READING

Particularly influential regarding Spartan education has been Marrou (1948), which through its many editions and translations continues to shape our notions of the Spartan upbringing. The current state of the debate on citizen training is represented by Kennell (1995) and Ducat (2006), who take different approaches to the surviving evidence. Dawkins (1929) remains an essential guide to the material evidence, despite its age and antiquated methodology. An idiosyncratic treatment of a very broad range of testimony for female education can be found in Pomeroy (2002). The question of assessing the evidence for Spartan history provides the starting point for a stimulating debate between Hodkinson and Hansen in Hodkinson (2009: 385–498). For classical Sparta's history and institutions, see Cartledge (1979), a fundamental work. Cartledge and Spawforth (1989) cover the city's later history, while Kennell (2010) brings together new evidence and approaches in a synoptic study of Sparta from earliest times to late antiquity.

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CHAPTER 20

ENGENDERING THE SCROLL: GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S LITERACY IN CLASSICAL GREECE

MATTHEW P. J. DILLON

INTRODUCTION

A rather tall girl of probably seventeen to eighteen years of age holds her writing tablet kit, complete with stylus, in her right hand. She is being led—perhaps pulled—at her left wrist by another girl, who holds out her left palm face up, as if to indicate the way. With her upper body leaning backward, the former's posture indicates a certain reluctance to follow. Her dress is that of an Athenian citizen, being led by another, older girl who functions as a *paedagogus* (she is perhaps also a citizen girl), leading her from home where she will receive instruction in literacy (or is she being taken from her class and is returning home reluctantly?). This is the scene portrayed on the interior of an Attic red-figure drinking cup (*kylix*) by the Painter of Bologna 417, dating to 460–450 BCE (Figure 20.1).¹ Belonging to a series of red-figure scenes that began circa 460 and continued to around 420 BCE, it is one of several vases on which girls and women are shown in a literary setting: that is, with writing *implementa* (stylus and writing tablet) or with

¹ NY 06.1021.167; ARV² 908.13; Klein 1932: 29, pl. 29b; Richter and Hall 1936: pls. 80, 181, no. 78; Beck 1975: 56, no. 350, pl. 69; Cole 1981: 226; HASB 7, 1981: pl. 9.2, 10.1–2; Neils and Oakley 2003: 243, 247–8, no. 464. Neils and Oakley's interpretation of the two girls as *hetairai* because “only one category of women had lessons outside the home, and these were the *hetairai*” (Neils and Oakley 2003: 247) is contradicted by Amsterdam Allard Pierson Museum 8210 (see following discussion), which shows a “school scene” of girls learning. Citizen girls also learned how to sing and dance in groups for religious rites and so obviously left home for practice: BM E804 (ARV² 675.20) shows one such choral group of citizen girls with their maestro, and BM E185 (ARV² 1019.86) might be a representation of two citizen girls learning to dance. Neils and Oakley's homoerotic interpretation of the two girls, and the citizen women on the vase's exterior, seems to me improbable.



FIGURE 20.1 A citizen girl with a writing tablet and stylus, being led by another girl. New York Metropolitan Museum 06.1021.167, about 460–450 BC, Athenian red-figure *kylix*, The Painter of Bologna 417. (Photo courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, New York.)

book scrolls.² Educating boys was clearly a priority for those Athenian fathers who could afford to do so. But little is heard in the ancient literary sources about education for Athenian, or generally Greek, girls. Yet the iconographical evidence of various Athenian vases from the fifth century BCE—and the very existence of women writers throughout Greece—indicates that some girls definitely learnt not only to read but also to write and continued to read into adulthood.

While boys' education is treated more fully by modern scholars, obviously owing to the greater degree of material available, there is a paucity of serious discussion about

² Girls and women with scrolls (Muses, Athena, and Iris with scrolls or writing cases are not listed here): Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 8210 (ARV² 838.27); Athens, National Museum 1260 (ARV² 1060.145); Athens, Kerameikos Museum 8070 (no ARV²); BM E190 (ARV² 611.36), BM E209 (ARV² 1212.4); BM 1921.0710.2 (ARV² 1060.138); Hermitage 875 (no ARV²); Louvre CA 2220 (ARV² 1199.25), Louvre G440 (ARV² 923.28); New York, Solow Art and Architecture Foundation (no inventory number, no ARV²); privately owned, Painter of Athens 1826 (no inventory number, no ARV²); Rome, Villa Giulia 50447 (ARV² 852.5), and perhaps 50452 (no ARV²).

girls' and women's education, especially as it relates to any literary pursuits. Ancient sources make passing references to learning and literacy; one is reduced to the usual pil-laging and pilfering of relevant passages for evidence on this topic. A dreary essay entitled "On Education," and ascribed to Plutarch, deals only with boys. A paucity of written sources renders the scholarship of Greek girls' literacy almost dysfunctional, and it is mainly to artistic sources that one turns.³

READING WOMEN ON ATHENIAN VASES

Earliest of all the Athenian vase scenes showing a woman reading is a white-ground *lekythos* (oil jug) of about 460 BCE by the Painter of Athens 1826.⁴ Seated on a chair, a woman holds open a scroll so that the Greek letters on it are clearly visible to the viewer. The positioning of the scroll in this way is an artistic convention, and it is not unusual, as here, for the letters shown to have no literate meaning. Such "writing" is referred to as "nonsense inscriptions": the woman herself can read, but the vase painter is illiterate. The artist's intention must be to convey, as similarly in later scenes, that the woman is reading the scroll—and out loud. For there is another woman present, standing and listening attentively, her head leaning ever so slightly forward with her chin resting on her left hand. Clearly engrossed, the two are enjoying a moment of shared reading together. A writing tablet "hovers" in the field above the scroll, a typical signifier of literary activity in such scenes. The seated woman not only can read but presumably also can write, skills she will have learned as a child.

Such images belong to the so-called mistress and (slave) maid category of scenes, and here the citizen woman is obviously reading to her slave (*pace* Immerwahr 1973: 147; Oakley 2004: 43). The standing woman in this depiction is usually interpreted as a member of the family or a close friend, but the pose belongs to the traditional "seated mistress, standing slave" motif. Literate, but perhaps alone at home without company, the mistress of the house passes away the time reading to her enraptured—or perhaps merely idle or polite—slave. Shown as it is on a *lekythos*, a vessel intended for depositing at the grave, this scene and the piece itself were probably specially commissioned on the woman's death and show her in what must have been one of her favorite pastimes. The scene has a particular subject and is not merely a generic one. The commissioner was presumably her husband or perhaps her father.

³ For ancient written sources on girls' and women's literacy: Beck 1964: 85–8; Pomeroy 1975: 74; Harris 1989: 106–8 (following Beck 1964; Immerwahr 1964, 1973); Thomas 1992: 10; Blundell 1995: 132–4; Thomas 1992: 10; most writers on Greek education simply overlook women: e.g., Brulé 2003; Robb 1994; for the Athenian definition of education: Morgan 1999: 46–53.

⁴ Painter of Athens 1826 (privately owned); Immerwahr (1973: 146–7, pl. 33.3–4, fig. 17; 1990: 99); Oakley (2004: 43, also 46, fig. 17, list 3, no. 32); Glazebrook 2005: 37, cat. no. 4. Book scrolls: Immerwahr (1964, 1973); Pöhlmann (1976); cf. Turner (1952: 12–3).

This first depiction of a woman reading on an Athenian vase is followed by several other examples where women are shown holding and so presumably reading book scrolls. Eleven of these depict Muses, who often appear in the company of Apollo (Beck 1975: 56–7). But several undoubtedly show Athenian citizen women reading. As the presence of architectural features, interior domestic items, and slaves with boxes indicates, these literate women are pictured in citizen household contexts. Such vases depicting both girls and women with scrolls and writing tablets have been identified by previous scholars.⁵

For girls' and women's literacy in Athens and Greece generally, iconography is more rewarding than the meager literary evidence, but it is burdened with the usual methodological and diachronic problems. Yet these vases have to be addressed for they are the primary evidential basis for any treatment, analysis, and discussion of the education of girls and women. Many observations and interpretations of these works are possible. A close reading is always necessary, and new interpretations not only are possible but also need to be advanced as the domestic scenes of these women—indicating that they are citizen wives—admit fully to further discussion.

Muses themselves were considered to be literate: to take a single example, an Athenian red-figure *pyxis* dating to 430–410 BCE depicts a Muse holding an open book scroll.⁶ It is generally held, however, that the gender of the Muses lends no substance to the proposition that mortal citizen woman could read and write; the Muses are viewed as mere personifications whose gender is irrelevant. As a result, such scenes are relegated by modern scholars to the category of nonevidential status for women's literacy (Beck 1975: 55; Glazebrook 2005: 4, 34, cf. 27). But this cannot be the case. Muses could be depicted holding and reading book scrolls precisely because Athenian citizen women did so also. The earliest Muse with book scroll scene in fact dates to 450 BCE, but nearly all the others cluster in the period 420–400 BCE; by this time the typology of scenes depicting Athenian citizen women reading was well-established.

Muses did not set the tone or pattern, so to speak, for Athenian women, and reading Muses are not divorced from the typology of women's reading scenes. Despite their divine status, Muses read specifically because Athenian citizen women could read: Muses reflect the reality of women's literacy in Athens. While Muses presumably did not have to learn to read but had this skill as part of their divine attributes, Athenian women learned to do so as young girls, in circumstances for which there is

⁵ Beck 1975: 56–8, nos. 349–73; Immerwahr 1964, 1973; Glazebrook 2005: 37–8, cat. nos. 1–15; some vases are also discussed by Cole 1981: 223; Williams 1983: 99–100; Lewis 2002: 157–9; cf. Pomeroy 1977: 51. Discussions of women on Athenian vases and the illustrations chosen do not always include women reading scenes: Ferrari 2002: figs. 1–109; cf. Lissarrague 1992.

⁶ Athens MN 19636; manner of the Painter of Meidias; *Para.* 479.91 bis (cf. ARV² 1328); *LIMC* vi Mousa, Mousai 96 = *LIMC* vi Mousaios 11 = *LIMC* vii Thamyris, Thamyris 9; Brommer 1973: 509, no. 9; Philippaki 1988: 89–95, pls. 10.1–7; Burn 1987: 116, MM 133; Immerwahr 1990: 99, n. 6, cat. no. 670; Arias 1995: 68–71, figs 19–22; Glazebrook 2005: 39, cat. no. 23; Oakley and Palagia 2010: 323, fig. 11. For Muses with book scrolls shown on vases, see esp. Beck 1975: 57–8.

little information, except for the vase Amsterdam APM 8210 (see following discussion). But the main qualification is this: Athenian women read inside while Muses (usually, but not always) read outside. Dichotomization of this type underlines the interior nature of the citizen woman's reading activities, as opposed to the exterior environment that the Muses inhabit, which in turn recalls the outside world of the citizen male.⁷

Other mythical beings could also read. The famous Theban Sphinx, depicted on a Greek carnelian scarab ring (now lost) of about 480–460 BCE, holds an open scroll in her paws and reads the riddle she sets for those who consult her as an oracle (Lullies 1954; Demisch 1997: 97, fig. 273; *LIMC* viii Sphinx 185). Contemporaneous as it is with the initial production of reading scenes on Attic vases, this work furnishes a direct corollary to women's literacy at Athens. Moreover, the first actual depiction of a female with a writing case—hitherto uncommented on—is the goddess Iris in the tondo (round area inside) of a red-figure *kylix* by the Eucharides Painter, dating to 490–480 BCE (San Antonio Museum; *LIMC* v Iris I.22, cf. 34). Here Iris holds a messenger staff (*kerykeion*) in one hand and the writing case, which would have opened to reveal two waxed sides on which a message was written, in the other. When the gods tell Iris to deliver a message, clearly it is sometimes written down.

Is this particular Iris a reflection of women's literacy? Certainly the goddess in Homeric epic does not take written messages to other gods and mortals but reports messages verbatim. Yet now, in fifth-century Athens, this female deity carries a writing tablet, indicative of female literacy and an awareness of this literacy in Athens. Here, Iris is patterned on women with writing tablets and must reflect women's literacy. The scene is modeled on women carrying writing cases, as shown in Figure 20.1. Athena herself writes, as shown on a red-figure Panathenaic amphora, where the goddess holds an open tablet in her outstretched left hand and a stylus in her raised right hand.⁸ She too replicates Athenian citizen women's literacy on the divine level.

Returning to the mortal world, on a red-figure *hydria* (Manner of the Niobid Painter, circa 470–450 BCE) a young seated woman is shown bent forward, intently reading an opened book scroll with a nonsense inscription of sixteen *stoichedon* lines (Figure 20.2). In front of her a woman holds a chest, from which the scroll has probably been taken. On vases, household chests are usually shown carried by slaves (the reading scenes provide a notable exception), their contents having been removed by the mistress of the house. This one therefore contains her personal property: perhaps several scrolls.⁹ At the far right of the scene is a woman holding a flower. Reader and flower bearer both wear a *chiton* with sleeves and a *himation*: they are citizen wives. In addition, the flower

⁷ Louvre CA 2220: ARV² 1199.2 (Lissarrague 1956: 58–9, fig. 49; Glazebrook 2005: 38, cat. no. 11; Joyal 2009: 53–4, fig. 3.2).

⁸ Munich Staatliche Antikensammlung 2314: ARV² 362.14; CVA Munich pls. 197–98; Poland 1922: 198; *LIMC* iii Athena 616; Beck 1975: pl. 6.32; Ohly-Dumm 1975: 9, pl. 1; *Jh* 51, 1976–77: 127, fig. 7; Boardman 1985: fig. 307.

⁹ British Museum E190: ARV² 611.36; Immerwahr 1964: 25, no. 14, fig. 5; Beck 1975: 56, no. 351, pl. 69; Keuls 1989: 105, fig. 90; Prange 1989: 215, GN 51; Glazebrook 2005: 37, cat. no. 5.

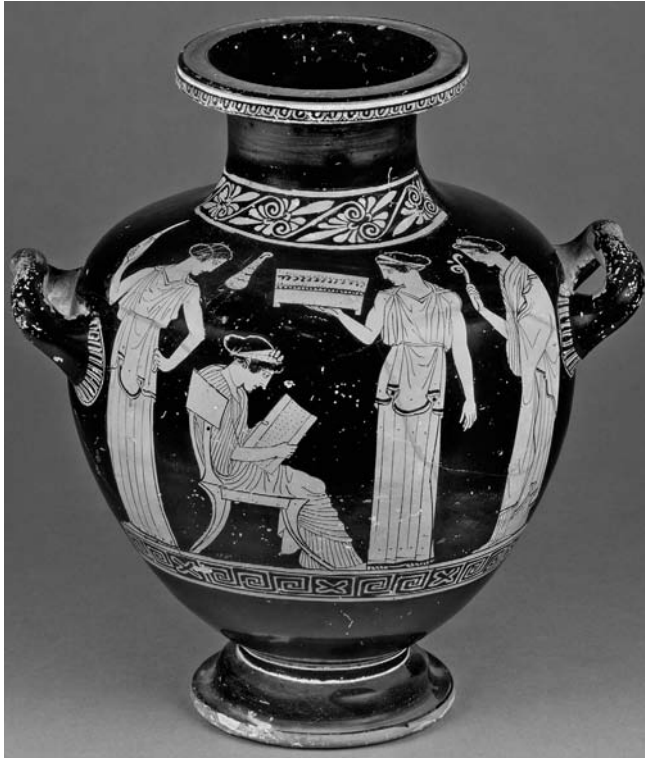


FIGURE 20.2 A woman reads from a book scroll, with attendant slaves, with another citizen woman present (far right); BM E190, about 470–450 BC, Athenian red-figure *hydria*, Manner of the Niobid Painter. (Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.)

bearer has a radiate dotted *sphendone* (headband), suitable for a citizen wife, and, of course, the seated figure on Athenian vases is always the mistress of the household. The other two women in the scene are dressed as typical slaves and wear Doric chitons that leave their arms exposed. One slave has brought a box; the other one carries what looks very much like a type of long purse present on other vases. If leather, and containing a few coins, it could be balanced in this way on the woman's hand. So a reconfigured interpretation can be posited. A young woman bends over her scroll, which has come from the box her slave has fetched, while the slave with the purse has money to give to the older standing flower bearer: she has come to teach the young woman and has charged a fee, which is now in her purse which the slave on the far left carries. No wonder the young woman is so intent on her reading, being in a lesson environment. Girls, then, could well have been educated in reading by other women who came to a house specifically for this purpose.

Scenes of companionship and reading are found more than once on vases: a red-figure *pelike* by the Sabouroff Painter shows a seated woman reading, and another woman is present (Villa Giulia 50447; ARV² 852.5). On a *kylix* by the same painter, a girl looks up

from her scroll at a standing woman who is perhaps an adult instructor (Amsterdam APM 8210; ARV² 838.27; Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum G73 has a similar theme). A truly magnificent red-figure *lekythos*, 440–430 BC, by the Klügmann Painter, presents a lone standing woman holding a scroll opened quite wide. In front of her to the left is an open box, from which she has evidently taken the scroll. Is she perusing the scroll to see if she really wants to read this one, and will she put it back to find intellectual stimulation in another? Behind her, on the wall to the right, is what appears to be a rolled up scroll, further signifying the content of the scene: she is a true bibliophile.¹⁰

Music was another accomplishment of the Athenian citizen woman. Lyres and scrolls are seen together on some vases, for example, on an Attic red-figure *kalpis hydria* by the Group of Polygnotos dating to about 440 BCE (Figure 20.3). Here, among women playing tortoise-shell harps, one woman is shown holding an open scroll and looking toward a companion: perhaps they are deciding on the day's reading. On the far left, another woman holds a checker pattern box that is probably a book chest, and there is a tablet with a stylus on the wall. Note the heron, a common pet in elite households, a signifier of a domestic context, and also a propitious omen.¹¹ One scene, on a red-figure *pelike* dating to circa 420 BCE, has a girl with an open scroll that she does not read because she is distracted and looks at another girl, a lyre player.¹² Girls, reading, and music combined at an early age and reflect the elements of a girl's education. Music and reading coalesced to create something of a soiree atmosphere for girls and women at leisure (as on Athens 1260).

A red-figure *hydria* of 460 BC by the Niobid Painter has a standing woman (left) with a box (in front of her on the top of a two-stepped podium), holding an opened scroll toward a lyre player seated on this podium; she seems to be asking approval for the work she has chosen, perhaps poetry to be sung to the accompaniment of the reading of the scroll or, less likely, music to be played. A third woman holding a lyre and a box stands on the right, looking at the pair. Has this third woman looked in her box for something suitable to sing, or is she about to do so, should the scroll that has already been chosen and is being held open by the seated standing woman on the left not meet the satisfaction of the seated lyre player? The domesticity of the scene is established by the door that is ajar at the far left: the well-dressed women are in the woman's quarters; the open door signals to the viewer that the standing woman on the left has just arrived and that the musical activity is still in a preparatory stage (Solow Art and Architecture Foundation [no inventory number]; Bérard 1989: 90–1, fig. 124; Reeder 1995: no. 45). Similar scenes of small groups of women with musical instruments, but without book scrolls, need to

¹⁰ Louvre CA 2220: ARV² 1199.25; Immerwahr 1964: 25, no. 15; Beck 1975: 57, no. 356, pl. 70; *Jh* 100, 1985: 103, fig. 29c; Joyal 2000: 54, fig. 3.2a; Lewis 2000: 159, fig. 4.20. There is no need to interpret her as a muse (Beck 1975: 57, no. 356; Glazebrook 2005: 11–13).

¹¹ British Museum 1921.0710.2: ARV² 1060.138; Immerwahr 1964: 24–5, no. 13, figs. 9–10; Beck 1975: 60, no. 399, pl. 82; Lezzi-Hafter 1976: pl. 175a–b; Williams 1983: 102–3, figs 7.9–7.10; Matheson 1995: 478, no. PGU 162; Petersen 1997: 60–1, figs. 11a–b; Lewis 2002: 158, fig. 4.19; Glazebrook 2005: 38, cat. no. 9.

¹² Hermitage 875; Birt 1907: 143; Immerwahr 1964: 25, no. 17; Beck 1975: 56, no. 353.7, no plate.

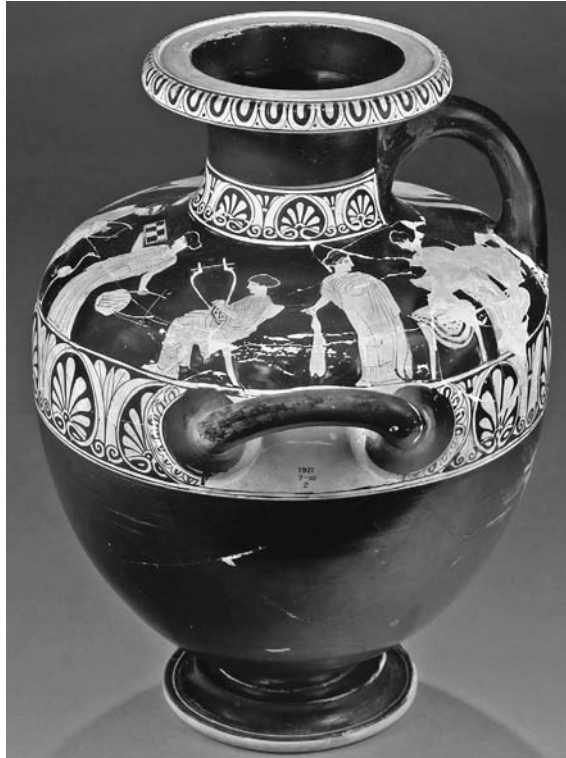


FIGURE 20.3 On the far left, a woman holds a lyre and a box (perhaps for book scrolls), a seated woman next to her prepares her instrument, while a woman on the right stands and looks at a woman on the far right who has an open scroll in her hand; BM 1921.0710.2, about 440 BC, Athenian red-figure *kalpis hydria*, Polygnotos Group. (Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.)

be interpreted as citizen women rather than *hetairai* (cf. Williams 1983: 102–3, figs. 7.9–7.10; Petersen 1997: 60–1).

These vases are not fictionalizing narratives portraying invented scenes of women's domesticity and literacy. Rather, each is a representation of reality and actual activities. Indeed, the Athenian vase painters of necessity must have had a source both of inspiration for this topos and an acquaintance with the reading activity in progress. Many of the scenes are individualized, and the women rendered differently, so that there must be the possibility that the women on these vases equate to specific individuals: they are not fictional women. Their husbands will have commissioned these vases. Many of the scenes appear on *hydriai*, the vessel that many women—though not of course elite ones—used to draw water from wells and fountains for the house. As special commissions these *hydriai* will have held “pride of place” as decorative items in the home. It goes without saying, of course, that the reading girls and women are not named by inscriptions on the vases (unlike Sappho on her vase), as these were produced in fifth-century Athens: girls and women were not named in public. Nor are these vase scenes mere

stereotypes of women as engaged in reading and music rendition, but actual portrayals of living women, just as the girls on the Parthenon frieze are almost certainly—in the opinion of this author—portraits based on specific young women who posed for the sculptors.

Iconoclastic as such an interpretation of the vase scenes might appear, it finds validation in the attention to detail in each of the scenes. Some overall typologies are certainly present, and three main categories exist in the taxonomy of these scenes—a woman reading a scroll by herself or with a slave, a woman reading in company with others, or a woman and book scrolls in a musical setting. Yet each scene is painstakingly nonstereotypical. Here, 2,500 years later, the viewer apprehends the women in precise moments of literary activity over a diachronic setting of some fifty years (470–420 BCE). Such literacy finds concrete expression in the various women writers known from the sixth and fifth centuries, some of whose work survives. Most famous of course is Sappho, writing on Lesbos in the sixth century BCE. But other women writers, less well-known, show that she is not an isolated example of a woman who not only read but also could compose and so presumably could write. More than a dozen women writers are known but significantly none for fifth-century Athens. Yet the possibility that these “writers” had others—males—record their poetry should not perhaps be overlooked. (For anthologies of women’s writings, see Plant 2004: nos. 1–15; cf. Rayor 1991.)

GENDER AND LITERACY

We pass from one gender to the other. Girls and women passively read, by themselves, or with companions or slaves. The world of men, as depicted on Attic vases, was a far cry from this: Athenian men are shown departing for battle, sacrificing before ithyphallic *hermai*, riding horses, engaged in athletic activities, visiting the local brothel, getting drunk at symposia, courting youths, and out hunting. But in the vase painter’s construction of male reality, men never read, they never write, and there is definitely never a stylus and writing tablet floating on the wall behind them—except in the classroom context. In reality men must have read, and they must have put stylus to papyrus. Yet these are interior activities, and the sphere of the male was the outside world, the extra-*oikos* space; it would be unmasculine to portray men in such activities. In addition, vase paintings of men reading might simply not have been interesting enough to warrant representation on vases. Reading was clearly one of the main activities of the elite Athenian woman, but the main activities of elite men were powerful, dramatic, and uncircumscribed by the walls of the house.

Citizen boys, however, were a different category. As pre- and proto-citizens, to be depicted on vases learning how to be literate was acceptable: boys must be educated for their personal gain and for the benefit and advancement of the state. There are many more scenes—over twice as many—of women reading than there are of boys at school. A mere handful of Athenian vases—a dozen or so—show boys in small or medium-sized

groups being instructed (Webster 1972: 58–9; boys' schooling: Harris 1989: 96–8, Table 2; see also the chapter by Oakley in this volume). Best known of these, without doubt, is the detailed Athenian red-figure *kylix* painted by Douris in about 480 BCE, with scenes of boys being instructed by men; the teaching scenes and the items on the wall indicate that their instruction covered writing, reading, and music.¹³ In a handy iconographic summary of the school's activities, one side of the vase depicts several items hanging behind the teachers and pupils: there is (from left to right) a closed scroll, a writing tablet, and a lyre. Although it might seem to be self-evident it needs stating: boys went to school together in groups, and their education is accepted and referred to in literature, while girls' education is not.

Sappho sits contentedly and in her hands holds open a scroll with two important inscriptions: on the outer part, the rolled, "Winged Words," and on the unrolled, "Gods. Airy words I commence." Three women attend her; two are named. One is Kallis, who holds a lyre: perhaps she will play while Sappho reads from the roll; the other woman is Nikopolis. This is the scene on a red-figure *hydria* of the Polygnotos Group dating to 440–430 BCE, the so-called Sappho reading vase (Athens 1260).¹⁴ The three standing women are commonly said to be her "pupils," but Sappho was not a "schoolmistress" in any sense. Various questions thus present themselves. Why was this vase produced? Did the artist have an interest in Sappho's literary prowess? Was the vase commissioned by someone who admired her work?

At the very least the vase indicates knowledge of Sappho's works in Athens. But was this predilection for Sappho that of a man or a woman? The existence of the Sappho vase need not in itself be any indication of women's literacy at Athens or of women's acquaintance with the poet's work. But given that other vases attest to the literacy of Athenian girls and women, it could be surmised that the wife of the purchaser of this vase was a devotee.

Sappho is shown reading in an Athenian *oikos*-setting on the vase Athens 1260, as is the woman reading on BM E190 (Figure 20.2), and the scenes are similar. Clearly, the artist of Athens 1260 has derived his scene of Sappho directly from what he has seen of, and his acquaintance with, women reading within an Athenian house. That is, iconographic assimilation has occurred. A sixth-century reading of Sappho has been translated into fifth-century Athenian historical reality—the woman who reads quietly in her domestic setting, with attendants (friends or slaves), provided the prototype for the depiction of Sappho.

¹³ Berlin 2285: ARV² 431.48, 1653; a select bibliography: CVA Deutschland 21 Berlin 2, pls. 77–8, 127.1, 5; Richter 1923: figs. 100–1; Klein 1932: 29–30, pl. xxxi; Nilsson 1955: 3, pl. 5; Webster 1972: 58–9; Rühfel 1984: 34–5, figs. 24a–b; Seki 1985: pl. 48.4; Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 44.

¹⁴ Athens 1260: ARV² 1060.145; CC 1241; Edmonds 1922; Beazley 1928: 9–10, n. 2; 1948: 338–9, no. 6; Turner 1952: frontispiece; Immerwahr 1964: 26, no. 18, fig. 2; Beck 1975: 57–8, no. 366, pl. 74; Schefold 1943: 57.3; Webster 1972: 60 (also that vases with scrolls are special commissions); Vogt 1981: 15; Bothmer 1985: 20, fig. 5; Matheson 1995: 174, pl. 149, 480, no. PGU 171; Kaltsas 2004: 260, no. 146; inscriptions: Beazley 1948: 338; Bundrick 2005: 101–2, fig. 61; Glazebrook 2005: 40, cat. no. 38.

LITERARY EVIDENCE FOR WOMEN'S LITERACY

We move now from the iconographic to the literary record, and so from a relative wealth of evidence to a dearth, and even more methodological difficulties than are presented by depictions of the book scrolls themselves. Citizen women are shown reading and citizen girls with stylus cases. But no vase shows women engaged in the art of writing itself. This would be a betrayal of social ideological norms: women cannot own property or participate in politics, so why should they write at Athens? Yet there is some limited Athenian literary evidence to complement the vases, which surely must be interpreted to mean that citizen girls—with their wax tablets and styluses—did indeed write.

Theseus' wife Phaedra commits suicide by hanging and leaves him a farewell note: he finds a *deltos* (tablet) "hanging from her beloved hand" (Eur. *Hippolytus* 856–7, cf. 856–98; *deltos*: Turner 1952: 12). Even in death, she must be clinging to it by one of its carry strings. Euripides' audience would therefore find this a plausible circumstance: Phaedra is not simply a woman of myth who can write but reflects the writing abilities of some elite Athenian women. Here her writing abilities are used to pen a false accusation against Hippolytus, but whether Euripides means to indicate any evils consequent upon allowing women to learn to write is unclear. Yet this letter, with its accusation, is absolutely vital to the plot: without it Theseus would not have known what impelled her to take her own life, and the tragedy of the play would not have unfolded.

Deianeira reports the contents of an ancient tablet that Herakles has left her and she seems to have read the tablet herself (Soph. *Trachiniae* 155–63, admittedly a problematic passage; cf. Harvey 1966: 622; Cole 1981: 224). Clytemnestra is sent two letters by Agamemnon, but this does not necessarily mean that she can read them herself (Eur. *Iphigeneia Aulis* 115–23). Iphigeneia is sent a letter she cannot read and asks a prisoner to write a letter for her, indicating she has neither reading nor writing ability (Eur. *Iphigeneia Tauris* 582–90). Of the poets it is only Sophocles and Euripides who reveal limited but nevertheless enlightening interest in women's literacy—and an inclination to incorporate this into plays performed before thousands of male citizens. Women who read and wrote presumably learned to do so in their childhood. The philo-hellene Scythian king Skyles was taught to read and write in the sixth century by his Greek mother, who was presumably an aristocrat (Herodotus 4.78). This is the only direct evidence that mothers may well have taught their sons to read, but it is outside the context of the polis and in the absence of schools of the type represented on the aforementioned Douris cup.¹⁵

Women in cultic contexts need not have been literate. Priestesses might have custodianship of the keys to a temple, but they did not need to keep temple records: boards of

¹⁵ According to Plutarch, Alexander the Great wrote his mother Olympias several letters (*Alexander* 39.4–5). Whether this is to be believed is doubtful; it could well be a Plutarchean invention.

men fulfilled this task at Athens. The Pythia of Delphi in the classical period gave out her oracles in clear, coherent poetry, employing hexameters in fact. She presumably cannot have learned the art of poetry when first commencing her duties, as her poetic services were required as soon as she commenced her service on the tripod. Nor is there any indication whatsoever that the god was believed to grant her the gift of *manteia* (divination) in hexameters themselves. These priestesses could well have been taught to read and write as girls, gaining a knowledge of the hexameter presumably through a thorough study of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which perhaps they learned by heart. Alternatively, they might have imbibed the skill of speaking in hexameters by listening to numerous oral recitations of these epics. Demosthenes has Aeschines reading out cult initiation material to the initiates while his mother organized and presided over the ceremonies (18.259, 19.199). This could well mean that she was not illiterate but rather that she was simply too busy to do the recitations herself (Cole 1981: 228). But Demosthenes' intention seems to be to indicate that Aeschines did the reading because his mother could not and so employed her son for the litany. Moreover, few (if any) women-only cults would have had a literary element; the cult procedures and rituals will have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, an oral tradition requiring no written record.

The complicated and highly dysfunctional family portrayed in Lysias' speech *Against Diogeiton* provides an insight into the numerate literacy of Athenian citizen women. Diogeiton has cheated his grandsons of their inheritance after the death of their father (his brother and son-in-law). The boys' mother, Diogeiton's own daughter, then approached her son-in-law about the matter, who subsequently brought a lawsuit against her father. When the matter came to court, this speaker was at pains to indicate to the jury that he had sought to avoid litigation so that the family's business would remain private; as this was to no avail he had to take it to the jurisdiction of the court. He informs the jurors that Diogeiton's daughter was able to prove that her father had received seven talents and four thousand drachmas in loans as part of the inheritance portfolio he was managing. She did this by bringing forth loan accounts from a record her boys had found and given to her. Clearly able to read the accounts, she understood their relationship to the inheritance, could do the arithmetic involved, and could prove that her husband had left a greater inheritance to his sons than her father was alleging. If the words put into her mouth by the speaker are any indication, she was also very articulate. Yet the speaker makes no excuse for the fact that she can read and do mathematical addition. Her literacy is not something to be hidden from the jurors; it would not prejudice them against her case. Someone had taken the initiative to teach her arithmetic and accounting; perhaps—ironically—even her own father? But her experience in accounting has not prevented her from being swindled by her father, because by law she herself could not manage her husband's inheritance.¹⁶

¹⁶ Lysias 32; for women's voices in Athenian legal cases, see Gagarin 2001: 161–76 (162–6 on Lysias 32, but his focus is not on women's literacy; cf. Thomas 1992: 10.

In *Oeconomicus* 7, Xenophon turns his attention to Socrates' famous discussion with Ischomachus about how he "trained" his wife who was but fifteen years old when he married her (Ischomachus: Freeman 1907: 46–7; Barclay 1959: 91–3; Golden 1990: 73–4; Just 1991: 114–8; Henry 1995: 50–2). She knew of spinning and weaving and was docile enough to engage in a conversation with Ischomachus, or more precisely for Ischomachus to talk at her and to instruct her on her numerous domestic duties. In fact, Ischomachus instructed her to work with the slaves at the weaving and other tasks (10.10). A hint of this wife's literacy is sometimes detected at *Oeconomicus* 9.10, but this is wishful thinking (cf. 7.5). That Ischomachus and his wife made a list of items for festivals and entertainment for their slave housekeeper to use is generally taken to indicate that the young bride can read and write (Cole 1981: 227; Pomeroy 1997: 51–2; Glazebrook 2005: 4). But the bride is not said to make the list. Rather, Ischomachus narrates that he and the wife made the list together; this could simply mean that he did the writing while she had some more passive role, such as holding up or pointing out the items. Given the stress that Ischomachus places on her ignorance at the time of marriage, this is preferable to the usual interpretation. This young girl is illiterate: she had spent the first fifteen years of her life "seeing, hearing, saying as little as required" (*Oec.* 7.5), and now will know enough—after instruction by her husband—to run the house (*Oec.* 7.3). Yet the "ignorance" of this girl was not always the case. Theophrastus, in the fourth century, wrote that women should be literate enough to manage the *oikos*, learning to read and write as much as is required. But he goes on to observe that those women who read too much are lazy, talk too much, and, presumably because they have read, desire to express their opinions, meddling in affairs not of their concern (Stobaeus *Ecl.* 2.31.31 Wachsmuth-Hense [= vol. 2, p. 207]; Cole 1981: 227).

Even the wife with a slave or more to supervise found the time to read. A woman on a red-figure *hydria* in London reads from an open scroll but is interrupted by the arrival of her maid, who is shown carrying an *alabastron*.¹⁷ Ischomachus' advice to his wife can be recalled: she must not mind having to deal with the slaves all the time. A moment of quiet tranquillity over a good read is shattered by the reality of the domesticity of the *oikos* and its responsibilities.

After the classical period, the education of girls seems to have expanded, and several terracotta figurines throughout Greece (but not from Athens) from the turn of the fourth century, or perhaps a little earlier, show girls in a range of literary poses: reading, writing, and carrying a writing tablet. This last opens up the possibility that the girl is shown on her way to a lesson, either private tuition or at a girls' school (for these terracottas, see Klein 1932: 29, pls. 29d, 30a–c; Beck 1975: 57, nos. 357–9, pl. 71; Pomeroy 1977: 52).

¹⁷ British Museum E209 (450–20 BCE): ARV² 1212.4; Immerwahr 1964: 25, no. 16; Beck 1975: 56, no. 352, pl. 69; Glazebrook 2005: 37–8, cat. no. 6.

HETAIRAI

Apart from citizen wives, there was another group of women in Athens who were routinely shown on vases but who participated more broadly in Athenian (male) social life. These were the prostitutes (*pornai*), and in particular the *hetairai*—usually loosely glossed by modern scholars as accomplished sexual companions with various cultured talents. According to Socrates in Plato's *Menexenus*, Aspasia of Miletus (a resident foreigner [*metoikos*] in Athens and Pericles' "companion" after his divorce) taught the art of rhetoric to many Athenians, including Socrates himself. Moreover, the reader is informed that Aspasia once composed a funeral oration and rehearsed it the day before, literally cutting and pasting it from previously prepared drafts. Strong skepticism about this information is validated, however, by the claim that she had also apparently composed Pericles' immortal *Funeral Oration* (*Menexenus* 235e–6c; oration: Thuc. 2.35–6). Henry's work on the tradition on Aspasia shows that rolling historical stones do indeed gather a great deal of pseudo-historical moss over the generations (Henry 1995: 32–40, 42–4; see also Cole 1981: 225). Contemporary accounts of Aspasia mention no literacy and focus specifically on her skills, none of which involved reading or writing.

Centuries later, Plutarch has citizens bringing their wives to listen to Aspasia declaim, and he even notes that this was despite the fact that she was an *hetaira* (Plut. *Pericles* 24.3). Clearly, this is a nonsense that directly contradicts what is known about women's appearances in public in Athens. Can the possibility be entertained that the very man (Pericles) who said not only that women should not be heard but also that they should not even spoken about by others had an *hetaira* who entertained Athenian citizen wives for a companion? Both Cole and Henry overlook a crucial point here. Aspasia, for whose ability to read and write there is no reliable contemporary evidence, could be later described (incorrectly) as being literate. This historiographical invention could become a credible feature of her later biographical tradition at Athens—that she knew rhetoric, read, wrote, and composed speeches for Pericles—only because of the literacy of elite women at Athens. But Aspasia herself was clearly illiterate.

A commonplace of scholarship is that *hetairai* were witty, companionable, and sociable. But they were not literate women, and when Plato's Socrates, decades after Aspasia's liaison with Pericles, informs Menexenus that Aspasia was the literate pedagogical source of his rhetorical skills, the ancient writers once again betray the modern scholar, and historiographical vigilance is a necessary methodological vice. What of *hetairai* in general? As long ago as 1925, Gomme's wit was employed to humorous effect against scholars who assumed that there were *hetairai* schools at Miletus and elsewhere in Asia Minor turning out literate and witty high-class prostitutes for the discerning citizen whose own wife was a "bore" because all she could do was spin, weave, look after the slaves, cook, and rear children all day long (Gomme 1925: 16–7: "The whole idea of a specially educated, specially privileged hetaera-class is fantastic"). While Hallett (2011, esp. 192) showed that Plautus' Roman comedy *Pseudolos* has literate prostitutes, it would be rash to advance on this by saying that the fourth-century BCE Greek comedies

from which Plautus derived some plot settings had literate prostitutes and that these women were taught to read and write in brothels. And when *hetairai*, like other women, made dedications with writing on them to the gods, this does not necessarily mean that they were literate, though it could undoubtedly point in that direction (see Dillon 2002: 203–4 for possible dedications by *hetairai* at Athens).

But Aspasia intrudes on the historian's attention a little more, and it is probably only in Xenophon that there is anything approaching a "real" portrait of her; after all, the historian knew Socrates and Aspasia personally. In the *Oeconomicus*, Aspasia advises on matters of domesticity and love but (crucially) possesses no literary skills. In Greek marriage, it was the role of the husband to instruct the wife (*didaskon*); it is his fault if he neglects to do this, and he cannot blame anyone else but himself for her deficiencies (Xen. *Oec.* 3.11). But what "instruction" is meant here? It is a matter of training, and Socrates tells his interlocutor that Aspasia can explain everything, just as there are experts in other areas of knowledge (Xen. *Oec.* 3.15–6). Critoboulus had married his wife when she was a mere slip of a girl who "had seen and heard hardly anything at all," like most of the wives Athenian men chose (Xen. *Oec.* 3.12–4). The allusion to Aspasia's "explanation" is made clear by reference to Xenophon's *Memorabilia* where, in Book 2, Aspasia is described as a "matchmaker" (Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.36). Aspasia will not give Critoboulus advice of an intellectual nature, but only regarding the training of a good wife; this is probably a specific reference to sexual submission, though modern scholars are too coy to deal with it. And if Socrates had consulted Aspasia about matrimony and domesticity (Henry 1995: 51), then he is not a very good practitioner of her advice: his wife Xanthippe seems to have been one of the most formidable and physically assertive women in Athens, overturning the dinner table when Socrates brought some friends home without asking her first (Plut. *Moralia* 461c–d).

SPARTAN GIRLS

Various academic discussions of the intellectual education of Spartan boys—or lack thereof—and the physical regime of the *agoge* overlook Spartan girls and women, who receive little attention in modern scholarship (cf. the chapters by Kennell and Patterson in this volume; Pomeroy's 2002 general overview has done little to remedy the situation). When they are discussed, the comments are generally brief and frequently inaccurate in their assumption that the girls had an education equivalent to the *agoge*; this, then, unfortunately becomes the main linchpin for discussions of girls' experiences. That some Spartan boys learned to read is clear, but the extent and levels of literacy at Sparta are vigorously contested (Cartledge 1978, 1981: 92; Boring 1979; Millender 2001). Some Spartans, for example, could write on and then read the famous Spartan *skytale* message stick; similarly, someone inscribed, and others read, various Spartan inscriptions (Dillon 2007). Despite ancient source references claiming that the Spartans were inimical toward literacy, learning, and music, the evidence suggests that literacy was

certainly not unknown at Sparta but that acquaintance with the written word was significantly lower than at Athens.¹⁸

Not a single reference relates to a literary education for Spartan girls. They received some form of exposure to physical exercise (Dillon 2014; see also Kennell in this volume). Yet one would hesitate to call this an education, let alone "some form of public education," as claimed by Nilsson. Certainly there was no girls' equivalent of the boys' program of physical education; to assume so is to misrepresent the nature of a girl's upbringing in classical Sparta. Moreover, details of the boys' *agoge* are not as clear as they might seem, and scholars of ancient Sparta show a determined lack of critical historiography when dealing with the upbringing of Spartan male youths (see Patterson in this volume). There is no evidential basis for any claim that Spartan girls had "some sort of formal, communal and public educational cycle."¹⁹

In his *Spartan Constitution*, Xenophon writes of an "education" (*paideia*) for the boys but for girls employs a much looser expression: that in states other than Sparta girls destined for childbearing are "raised in the approved manner" (1.3, 2.1, 2.14). It is obvious, then, that Spartan girls did not undertake a *paideia*: Xenophon must be pointing to the Spartan emphasis on physical exercise and outdoor exposure, which other Greek girls did not have. This "education" that Spartan girls received was based on physical exercises, perhaps tied mainly to religious festivals. Other constituent parts of a girl's education were, negatively, a neglect of the domestic arts learned by other Greek girls, and positively, participation in singing in choirs, especially the magnificent lyrics of Alcman. While on these, such choirs of young and married women are seen by scholars as having the same pedagogical function as the *erastes*—*eromenos* relationships between adult men and male youths at Sparta about which Xenophon waxes so lyrical (Ducat 1999: 58). But no book scrolls were involved.

Xenophon himself asks how girls brought up with a sedentary lifestyle and trained to work wool could rear better children; hence, Lycurgus confined clothing production to slave women (by which he presumably means helots). Spartan girls were to receive physical training no less than the men and competed in races and contests of strength. Further evidence for Spartan attitudes toward girls and their physical fitness for birthing hardly needs listing here. For the purposes of eugenics, according to Plutarch, Lycurgus had the *parthenoi* run races, wrestle, and throw the discus and javelin. Aristophanes' Lampito, the Spartan woman representative at Athens, possesses the strength of a bull

¹⁸ Diels 1961: 90 F2.10; see also Plut. *Lyc.* 13.1–4, 16.10; *Mor.* 227b, 237a; see Millender 2001. Education of Spartan boys: Marrou 1956: 14–45; Hodkinson 1983: 245–51; Cartledge 1992; Ducat 1999. Spartan girls' education: Marrou 1956: 23; Barclay 1959: 60–1; Harvey 1966: 625; Bowen 1972: 55–6; Cartledge 1978: 31, 1992: 14, 1981: 93 [2002: 141–3]; Garland 1990: 138; Fantham et al. 1994: 57–64; Kennell 1995: 45–6; Ducat 1999: 57–8; Blundell 1995: 151–2; cf. Thommen 1999.

¹⁹ *pace* Nilsson 1908: 2.848; cf. Cartledge 1981: 91 [2002: 141, n. 39], 1992: 14; Fantham 1994: 59. Ducat 1999: 57 is correct to note that neither Xenophon nor Plutarch indicates that there was any semblance of a girls' *agoge*; see also the chapter by Kennell in this volume for Spartan girls and physical training but lack of an equivalent to the boys' *agoge*.

and is proud of her buttock jumps. Euripides, famously, has Spartan boys and girls sharing running tracks and wrestling places, a detail that need not be doubted but one that Xenophon overlooked. Girls underwent physical training and were famous as runners, but their *paideia* had no literary content (on Spartan girls and athletic training for eugenics, with ancient sources, see Dillon 2014).

That women owned two-fifths of the land in Sparta might seem to imply some business skills (*Politics* 1270a 23; how Aristotle arrived at this figure is unknown; Cartledge 1981; Hodkinson 1986: 386–406; French 1997: 263–4; Pomeroy 2002: 67). But modern historians of ancient Sparta have almost certainly exaggerated the extent to which Spartan warriors were absent from their land, and Spartan women are not to be supposed to have had an education comparable to that of Roman women, which allowed the latter to run successful commercial enterprises. Moreover, running farms does not require literacy or written records, especially when there is no taxation system based on agriculture (unlike in ancient Egypt).

But Sparta was a society possessing some written documents, and more particularly documents on stone. Spartan women were exposed to this public display of writing. There are, however, no known Spartan women poets or writers in general (Phintys can be discounted: Plant 2004: 84). A reference in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* to a Spartan Muse is not to be taken as a literal reference to an actual Spartan poet (cf. Cartledge 1978: 31). Gorgo, daughter of the “mad” king Cleomenes (ruling ca. 520–490 BCE), detected the presence of a hidden message written on wood under the wax on a wooden tablet (*del-tion*). Yet Herodotus does not record that she could read it, and his comment that the Spartans read the message after she revealed its presence suggests, in fact, that she was illiterate (Herodotus 7.239). One further remark is sometimes taken to indicate that Spartans were educated: Plato states that in Sparta not only men but also women prided themselves on their education. As proof, Plato describes—in all seriousness—the ability of even the meanest of the Spartans to lose their way in an argument at first but to retrieve the day by making a pithy remark. A Spartan's ability to make these laconic winning statements is attributed to their perfect education: here *paideia*, education, could mean just about anything, not necessarily (and probably not at all) knowledge of the alphabet, reading, and book scrolls (*Protagoras* 342d; cf. Cole 1981: 228).

Plato's views on education in many ways resemble the main principles of the Spartan *agoge*: in the *Republic*, girls are to be trained in the same subjects as boys—gymnastics and music. He knows that these coeducational practices will involve breaking societal norms. Learning to read and write is not mentioned; rather, music and sport are emphasized (Plato *Republic* 451e–52b). The *Laws* provides something more substantive: the *paideia* of the children in the ideal state “simply cannot go without comment” (788a). Plato describes a program of physical education (esp. 794c), with mention of dancing and music (esp. 795e; see overall 788a–802; Aristotle *Politics* 1.5.12, 2.6.5; Jaeger 1945: 3.245–62; Barclay 1959: 95–6; see also Patterson in this volume).

The focus in both Platonic dialogues is on a physical gender equality that will allow women to take their place alongside men in warfare and to carry out the same physical tasks as men. The education of the girls in the ideal state is constituted by physical

education, complemented by optional extracurricular pursuits such as riding, archery, javelin throwing, sexual intercourse, and sling shotting. But the historian will search in vain for mention of a liberal literary education, either for boys or girls. Interestingly, Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* are often cited as advocating women's education, but there is nothing whatsoever in either text to support this. Plato is clearly modelling and extensively expanding the Spartan emphasis on exercise for girls and women for eugenic purposes (but cf. Patterson in this volume on the relationship between Plato and the Spartan "mirage"). And although some modern scholars of ancient Sparta postulate, and some claim as fact, that Spartan girls had a "formal education," this is but a whimsical academic fantasy.

CONCLUSION

We return, in concluding, from the illiterate but healthy Spartan woman to the educated pale Athenian elite citizen-wife. Note the persuasive spread of dates for the reading vases discussed earlier: the earliest vase dates to approximately 470 BCE, the latest to about 420. This is a typical range in Athenian pottery for the development of particular ceramic topoi. From 490 BCE numerous maenad scenes are in evidence, petering out for the fifth century in about 440 BCE (Dillon 2002: 148). It is possible to suggest that artists' major attentions in the overlapping period moved away from the sexual innuendo and liministic, outdoor Dionysiac rites of women to interior depictions of an *oikos*-oriented nature. From the outward lives of women to their inward, artistic motifs began to reflect the greater emphasis on the interiorization of women's lives that reached legislative recognition with Pericles' citizenship law of 451 BCE: citizen women's chastity became more crucial than ever and their place physically within the *oikos*, as opposed to being outside it, more important.

Elite women engaged in the activity of reading were obviously of interest to vase painters or, if it is to be imagined that these are custom pieces, to their menfolk. Such women were a source of pride to some fathers and husbands. Modern scholars stress the domestic duties of women, but clearly there was much more to women's lives. Women had a rich religious life, for example (Dillon 2002: esp. epilogue; 2006). In addition, within the household they did not spend all of their time in selfless devotion to domesticity as Ischomachus in his patriarchal text advocates to his wife. There was time for relaxation and the pursuit of the finer things in life: quiet reading to oneself, or in company, and soirees with music and the mutual sharing and enjoyment of the written word. These vases extol a freedom for women, their diversion from domestic routine, and their visits to each other's houses. While the activity of reading might seem to stress the interior nature of women's lives, it also celebrates women's gatherings and leisure activities. Citizen girls' education in the art of reading meant that as adults they could gather together and engage in literary pursuits. Marriage did not end their literacy, but rather literacy enabled women, after marriage, to meet up in each other's houses for pursuits

divorced from the domesticity of the *oikos*. When the reluctant schoolgirl is being led off by another girl as shown on the interior of a vase (NY 06.1021.167: ARV² 908.13; see note 1), the exterior scene shows a world of women gathered together, with a writing tablet on the wall: her literacy will allow her to join this group of women, and she may well be being led into their company so that as adult women they can teach her to read and write.

When placed alongside the vase record for men, these scenes of girls and women reading reveal very separate lives for Athenian men and women and reflect their different and accepted societal roles. Yet all was not drudgery and a daily household grind for women. The written word released them, allowing them to interact with each other on an intellectual plane: choosing what to read, what music to play. These literary acts must have been followed by discussion of what they had read on the scrolls and sung to the lyre. Citizen girls, through being educated, transcended—upon adulthood—at least some of their domestic duties. They encountered other women in their houses, escaping home and hearth and its attendant responsibilities. Engendered scrolls and the ubiquitous writing tablets open a new window into the Athenian women's quarters and their extradomestic pursuits.

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CHAPTER 21

EDUCATING THE YOUTH: THE ATHENIAN *EPHEBEIA* IN THE EARLY HELLENISTIC ERA

ERIC CASEY

INTRODUCTION

IN the wake of their defeat at Chaeronea (338 BCE) at the hands of Philip II of Macedon, the Athenians under the guidance of the statesman Lysurgus effectively formalized and made compulsory the two-year program of military training known as the *ephebeia*.¹ Eighteen- and nineteen-year-old men who undertook this training were called ephebes, a term derived from *hebe*, which means “youth” but which can also refer to the transition into adulthood (e.g., *eph' hebes* Ar. *Eq.* 524).² While the institution certainly aimed to professionalize Athenian soldiers (Pélékidis 1962: 117; Dillery 2002: 469), the *ephebeia* offered some civic as well as military instruction from the beginning, and I will trace changes in the balance of these two elements. Part of a series of internal reforms and building programs funded by the prosperity paradoxically enjoyed by Athens just after Chaeronea,³ the reformed *ephebeia* in the 330s both provided a more formalized system of military training and fostered renewed

¹ It is not clear when exactly the term *ephebeia* came into use to describe the system of ephebic training. Friend 2009: 8, n. 14 pointed to *IG* II² 1028.43 (100 BCE) as the earliest certain use of the term but also noted its potential appearance in two earlier inscriptions from the third century BCE (*peri ephebeias* [“about the *ephebeia*”] is restored in *IG* II² 700.16 and *SEG* 26.98.21).

² The vocabulary for childhood and young adulthood is not precise or consistent in the extant sources (Golden 1990: 12–6).

³ Friend 2009: 75–98 argued that the *ephebeia* was not originally part of the Lysurgan reforms but rather was founded specifically as a response to Alexander the Great’s defeat of Thebes in September 335 BCE and the resulting need to better defend Attica.

patriotism and civic cohesion at a difficult moment for Athens.⁴ The evidence for the activities of the Athenian ephebes is scattered across several centuries; however, I will focus primarily on authors and texts from the fourth century BCE. As the literary sources are strangely silent on the structure and form of the Athenian *ephebeia*, my investigation depends in large part on a small corpus of ephebic inscriptions that begin to appear in 334 BCE and serve to honor the work of the ephebes and their instructors. In addition, I will draw upon an oath said to have been sworn by the ephebes and discuss a brief contemporary description of the institution in a work composed during the first ten years of the Lycurgan *ephebeia*.

The *ephebeia* gradually shifted from military and civic training to a more intellectually oriented institution (while never fully abandoning the military instruction), and the second part of this chapter argues that Zeno started the Stoic school in part to aid that transition. Zeno's contributions to Athenian education may account for why he was the first philosopher to be honored in Athens with a public decree along with other unprecedented honors. As I will show, the honorary decree itself contains hints of Zeno's influence on the changing nature of ephebic education in Athens.

THE EPHEBIC OATH

While sources are scarce for many aspects of the *ephebeia*, the young men who participated in it were held up as a symbol of Athens. The institution, however, underwent changes parallel to those of the city in the seventy-seven years between Chaeronea and the end of the Chremonidean war (261 BCE). Something of the character of this institution can be glimpsed in the sole surviving speech of Lycurgus, a long oration against a certain Leocrates who stood accused in 330 BCE of deserting Athens after Chaeronea. In charging him, Lycurgus invokes three important civic oaths that ensure the loyalty and cooperation of key constituents in the democracy: the oaths sworn by archons, members of a jury, and private citizens (Mikalson 1998: 14–8). Lycurgus accuses Leocrates of violating the terms of the oath taken by young men upon becoming citizens, saying, “For you have an oath, which all citizens swear when they are entered in the register of the deme (*lexiarchikon grammateion*) and become ephebes, that you will neither disgrace your sacred arms (*ta hiera hopla*) nor leave your place in the line of battle, but that you will defend (*amunein*) your country and hand it down (*paradosein*) better than it was” (Lycurg. *Leocrates* 76).⁵

⁴ Although it is unclear to what extent Lycurgus was directly responsible for Athenian policy, he was a key figure in handling the finances underlying the reforms. In a fragment of a speech by Lycurgus, a certain Epicrates was praised for his law concerning the ephebes. The identity of Epicrates is unclear and the content of the law is unknown (Pélékidis 1962: 13).

⁵ All translations in this chapter are my own unless otherwise noted.

An inscription dating to the middle of the fourth century BCE preserves the entire oath, which reads as follows⁶ (omitting the initial lines of dedication):

Traditional oath of the Epheboi, which they must swear:

I will not disgrace these sacred arms (*ta hiera hopla*), and I will not desert the comrade beside me wherever I shall be stationed in a battle line. I will defend our sacred and public institutions (*hiera kai hosia*) and I will not hand over (to the descendants) the fatherland smaller, but greater and better, so far as I am able, by myself or with the help of all. I will obey those who for the time being exercise sway reasonably and the established laws and those which they will establish in the future. If anyone seeks to destroy them, I will not admit it so far as I am able, by myself or with the help of all, and I will honor the traditional sacred institutions (*hiera ta patria*). Witnesses are the gods Aglauros, Hestia, Enyo, Enyalios, Ares and Athena Areia, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone, Heracles, and the boundaries of the fatherland, wheat, barley, vines, olive-trees, fig-trees.⁷

While its origins remain unclear (Tod 1948: 306; Siewert 1977: 102; Friend 2009: 32–4), by the late 330s the ephebes swore this oath in the sanctuary of Aglauros (Pausanias 1.18.2), located on the eastern slope of the Acropolis, as the similarity of language between the passage from Lysurgus and the inscription itself makes clear (cf. Dem. 19.303).⁸ Young men eighteen years of age would swear the oath when being enrolled onto the register of the deme (*lexiarchikon grammateion*)⁹ after first submitting to a *dokimasia*, an examination to confirm their age, freedom, and lineage (both their parents had to be Athenian; see *Ath. Pol.* 42.1–2).

The oath displays how intertwined military, civic, and religious matters were in classical Athens.¹⁰ The pledge not to abandon one's fellow fighter undoubtedly refers to the communal nature of hoplite warfare although it should be recalled that by the time of the fourth century BCE hoplites were not the only important category of warrior, with light-armed troops, cavalry, archers, and sailors all contributing to national defense (Hanson 1996, 1999, 2000; Trundle 2010). The oath stresses the goal of defending the polis and one's fellow citizens and expresses obedience to laws passed by the people and the *boule*. It clearly ties the military goals of the young soldier to preserving the rule of civic and religious law, but there is no mention of any educational aspects to the *ephebeia*. Once the ephebic decrees began to appear in 334 BCE, there are indications that the institution soon started to broaden its scope and give some sign of its future as an educational and civic as well as military institution.

In addition to noting several allusions to the oath in Greek tragedy,¹¹ Siewert (1977) pointed out convincing echoes of the oath in Thucydides. For instance, Pericles exhorts the Athenians in language quite close to the oath: "[We] must defend ourselves (*amunesthai*)

⁶ Found at Acharnae, the inscription was first published in Robert 1938: 302–3 and has been reprinted in Tod 1948: 303–4, no. 204; Daux 1971; Siewert 1977; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 440–2, no. 88. Two literary versions of this oath can be found in Stobaeus 4.1.48 (Wachsmuth-Hense = 43.48 Meineke) and Pollux 8.105.

⁷ This translation is from Siewert 1977 with a few slight modifications.

⁸ On Aglauros and the ephebes, see Merkelbach 1972; Parker 2005: 216, 434–6.

⁹ See Demosthenes 57.60; Hansen 1991: 104.

¹⁰ See Plescia 1970: 16–8; Cole 1996: esp. 36–7; Chaniotis 2005: 18–9; Rhodes 2007: 12–3.

¹¹ For ephebic themes in Greek tragedy, see McCulloch and Cameron 1980; Vidal-Naquet 1988; Winkler 1990.

against our enemies in every way, and must endeavor to hand down our empire undiminished (*me elasso paradounai*) to posterity” (1.144.4).¹² Thucydides here provides an appeal to tradition that simultaneously adapts that tradition to current circumstances.

Guarding and training activities associated specifically with ephebes are discussed in texts from the fifth and fourth centuries, but any training seems to have been relatively informal and not subsidized by the state. In a conversation set in the late fifth century, Xenophon has Socrates say the following: “Just because the city offers no public military training is absolutely no reason why you should neglect it in private, too” (*Mem.* 3.12.5). The noun *ephebos* never appears in an inscription or literary text from the fifth century (Marcellus 1994: 42). Thucydides calls young recruits *neotatoi* (1.105.4) and elsewhere refers to members of a patrol as *peripoloi* (e.g., 4.67.2, 8.92; cf. *Lys.* 13.71; *Ar. Av.* 1177). Aeschines mentions becoming a frontier guard (*peripolos*) in the land for two years just after leaving childhood (2.167), which would place such duties in the 380s.¹³ In a work dated to 355 BCE, Xenophon refers to training in gymnasia and patrols in the countryside and anticipates the ephebic reforms of the 330s by suggesting that the expenses for physical training be subsidized by the state (*Poroi* 4.51–2; Ridley 1979; Parker 1996: 251–5; van Wees 2004: 94–5).¹⁴ The earliest extant example of *ephebos* occurs in Xenophon’s *Cyropaideia* (1.2.5–13; ca. 355 BCE), and *epheboi* appear in a speech by Demosthenes dating to 343 BCE.¹⁵ Aeschines called Misgolas his “comrade . . . and fellow ephebe” in 346 BCE (1.49 *helikiotes . . . kai synephebos*). This has been used as evidence of the pre-Lycurgan *ephebeia*, but it may refer instead to the relatively new system of military conscription by age classes named after eponymous heroes. Since Aeschines and Misgolas belonged to the same age class (*helikia*), they became eligible for military service in the same year, so *synephebos* means here “new fellow military recruit” (see *Ath. Pol.* 53; Friend 2009: 28–31). In sum, the evidence suggests that the *ephebeia* probably existed in some fashion before the 330s (primarily involving garrison duty as needed) but that Lycurgus renovated and reformed it on a grand scale.

ATHENAION POLITEIA 42

The new *ephebeia* is described in the *Athenaion Politeia* (Constitution of the Athenians; hereafter *Ath. Pol.*), one of the more remarkable papyrus finds of the late nineteenth

¹² Note the similar vocabulary in lines 8–10 of the oath: *amuno de kai huper hieron kai hosion kai ouk elatto paradoso ten patriida*.

¹³ For more on ephebes as border guards before 335 BCE, see Ober 1985: 90–5.

¹⁴ Xenophon here suggests funding the very sorts of activities associated with the *ephebeia* (*Poroi* 4.52): “Those guarding in the forts as well as those bearing the light shield and patrolling the land would do all these things more carefully if support were given for each of these duties.”

¹⁵ See Friend 2009: 23–7; cf. Pélékidis 1962: 23 for a discussion of the evolution of the term *ephebos*. Demosthenes 19.303 recounts that Aeschines at one time read out the oath that the ephebes take in the sanctuary of Aglauros. Plato never uses *ephebos* and instead generally uses the word *meirakion* (cf. Aesch. 1.49) when discussing young men and their education (Lacey 1968: 294).

century and the only complete surviving text from a massive project to describe 158 constitutions. It was probably the work of a student of Aristotle, but there is a possibility that Aristotle wrote it himself as an exemplar for his collaborators. Written in the late 330s and revised in the 320s when Aristotle was in Athens (Rhodes 1981: 56, 61–3), the *Ath. Pol.* represents a contemporary view of the reorganization of the *ephebeia* and has the most extensive ancient description of the institution. This chapter begins the part of the *Ath. Pol.* that is devoted to the contemporary state of the Athenian constitution (*politeia*), and it starts, appropriately, with the citizenship requirements and the enrollment of young citizens-to-be among their fellow demesmen after the *dokimasia*.¹⁶ What follows is the basis of most modern descriptions of the *ephebeia*. The contribution of the *ephebeia* to civic pride and public discourse is evident here (*Ath. Pol.* 42.2–43.1):

When these men have gathered the *epheboi* into a group, they first make the rounds of the temples, then they march off to Piraeus, where some of the *epheboi* serve as the garrison of Munichia, others of Acte. The people also elects two *paidotribai* and other teachers (*didaskaloi*) whose responsibility it is to instruct the *epheboi* in the use of hoplite arms, the bow, the javelin and the sling... In the second year an assembly is held in the theatre¹⁷ and the *epheboi* give the people an exhibition of their battle-formations (*ta peri tas taxeis*), after which they receive a shield and a spear from the city. Then they make patrols through the countryside and put in their time garrisoning the forts, serving thus for two years. Their dress is the short military mantle (*chlamys*) and they pay no taxes. They do not appear in courts of law either as plaintiffs or defendants, so that they have no excuse for absenting themselves from their duty. An exception is made in cases involving an inheritance, the marriage of an heiress, and hereditary priesthoods. Once their two years have elapsed, they duly join the rest of the citizen-body. Such is the manner of the enrollment of the citizens (*politai*) and the training of the youths (*epheboi*).¹⁸

Aside from another passage (53.4), in which the author recounts how the names of newly registered citizens used to be recorded on whitened tablets but now are inscribed on a bronze pillar in front of the council chamber, the *Ath. Pol.* unfortunately provides no information on changes in the *ephebeia* resulting from Lycurgus' initiative or on any specific laws about the ephebes.¹⁹ The Lycurgan *ephebeia* involved two years of training with a certain roster of supervisors (*sophronistai*) and instructors (*didaskaloi*) assigned

¹⁶ Friend 2009: 38–40 (cf. Rhodes 1981: 495) argued that *ephebos* at this time could refer either to a young citizen who passed the *dokimasia* but had not yet done the military service or to the first age class (*helikia*) eligible for military service. Here in *Ath. Pol.* 42.2–5, *ephebos* is used for the first two age classes (eighteen- and nineteen-year olds).

¹⁷ Dillery 2002 argued that there was not enough room in the theater of Dionysus for ephebes to make a display of their military prowess and places this drill instead in the Panathenaic Stadium.

¹⁸ Translation for the sections of chapter 42 are from Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009: 56–7. The first sentence of chapter 43 is my own translation.

¹⁹ The account is “disappointingly vague” (Rhodes 1981: 507) on the full range of ephebic activities. The author does not discuss the nexus of religious and civic concerns detailed in the oath, omitting even any mention of the oath itself.

by tribe as well as a central administrator (*kosmetes*) who oversaw the entire institution for the year. As the *Ath. Pol.* makes clear, the ephebes learned more than just the skills needed for hoplite warfare. Ober connects the training in the javelin and the catapult to the specific needs for defending the border forts and for fighting in mountainous regions (Ober 1985: 90–1). As in Lycurgus' description previously quoted, the military service is compulsory for all young male citizens-to-be. Noting restrictions on their involvement in the courts, the author stresses the full-time nature of this training. This level of commitment seems to be new to the reformed *ephebeia*, as there are anecdotes about young men having had extra time in the past to engage in politics (e.g., Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.1), to travel (Antiphon *ap.* Athenaeus 12.525b), and even to have had leisure during their ephebic years (Reinmuth 1971: 129). The *Ath. Pol.* suggests that ephebic training is in fact required for full citizenship; presumably this was part of the Lycurgan reforms.

The beginning of *Ath. Pol.* 42 explains that citizenship is open to all whose parentage is Athenian on both sides, and there is no explicit limiting of this pool of candidates when the discussion turns to the *ephebeia* itself. The author does not mention any specific property qualifications when discussing the parameters of the *dokimasia* that is intended to weed out undesirable candidates for the ephebic training. Despite the apparently open policy outlined in this passage, many scholars believe that the *ephebeia* was restricted to citizens of hoplite census,²⁰ while some leave this as uncertain (e.g., Raaflaub 1996: 157) and others, myself included, believe the thetes (lowest property class according to Solon's categories of citizenship) did participate (Garland 1990: 186; Hansen 1991: 109; Marcellus 1994: 213–24; Hansen 2006: 33–8; Friend 2009: 74). The *Ath. Pol.* reflects the Lycurgan innovation of paying the ephebes and their trainers for their services. That payment could be seen as a way to open up the ephebic training beyond the elites who could afford to do the training without any compensation. General estimates of the average numbers of ephebes from this initial period (334–302 BCE) must remain quite speculative as they rely on extrapolations from the numbers of ephebes listed by tribe on the fragmentary decrees. Even the relatively numerous inscriptions from the first two years only offer information on fewer than half of the ten tribes (three or four in 334 BCE and four or five in 333 BCE, depending on how Reinmuth 7 is dated).²¹ All other years are represented, if at all, by inscriptions reporting on only one or two tribes.²² Hansen (1991: 108–9) argued that, since the number of ephebes averaged about five hundred per year for the 330s and rose in the 320s, such numbers are too high to

²⁰ See Pélékidis 1962: 113–4; Reinmuth 1971; Rhodes 1981: 503; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 454; Hornblower 2007: 35.

²¹ In referring to the fourth-century ephebic inscriptions, I will use the text and numbering of Reinmuth 1971 as it is still the standard edition for this corpus. Marcellus 1994 and Friend 2009 compiled helpful catalogs that both update Reinmuth's text with supplements and revisions and provide other more recently published inscriptions.

²² The figures rely also on the idea that each of the ten tribes (twelve starting in 307 BCE when the Antigonis and Demetrias tribes were created) provided roughly the same number of ephebes and did so consistently each year (Reinmuth 1971: 103).

exclude the thetes.²³ Several possible reasons exist for the differences in annual numbers in this first decade. While all citizens were expected to enroll in ephebic service, only those who could afford it may actually have done so or the requirement may not immediately have taken full effect (*ibid.*, p. 109). I would add that there is no language of enforcement here and that the ideological potential of proclaiming universal participation in the ephebic training should not be underestimated.²⁴ Athens is acknowledging that aristocratic *arete* needs to be supplemented with the more vulgar acquisition of *techne*.²⁵ The Lycurgan-era reforms of the *ephebeia* are in a way answering Plato's question in the *Meno* about whether *arete* is teachable with a definitive answer in the affirmative, at least in the realm of military and civic education.

ACTIVITIES AND VALUES IN THE FOURTH-CENTURY EPHEBIC INSCRIPTIONS

Just over thirty ephebic inscriptions are extant from the fourth century, beginning in 334 BCE and divided into two clusters (334–323 and 306–302 BCE). The portrait of the *ephebeia* does not vary widely from that provided in *Ath. Pol.* 42 but supplies more information about the range of activities and the hierarchy of officers.²⁶ The terms of praise for the ephebes and their supervisors reveal something of the broader purposes of the *ephebeia* in the late fourth century BCE. The ephebic cohort appears to be organized as a microcosm of the democratic polis, with officers chosen from within their own ranks (Mitchel 1961). The selection of the *sophronistai* is reminiscent of the election of generals, further emphasizing the democratic institutional structure (Ober 2001: 204).

We know from later ephebic decrees (Pélékidis 1962: 211–56; Tracy 1979; Parker 1996: 253–5; Mikalson 1998: 172–9, 181–5, 243–9; Newby 2005: 171–92; Perrin-Saminadayar 2007: 627–32) that the ephebes participated in many religious processions, ceremonies, and sacred games.²⁷ While there are hints of some similar activity

²³ The state-funded shield and spear given to all the ephebes suggest that property classes were no longer deciding who becomes a hoplite (Hansen 1991: 108–9; cf. Christ 2001: 405).

²⁴ Athenian concern with recruitment and compulsory military service was not new to the fourth century (see Christ 2001, 2006: 65–87).

²⁵ The reforms of the 330s represent a shift away from the ideology of nonprofessionalism espoused, for instance, in the Periclean Funeral Oration where, in presumed contrast with Sparta, Athens claimed not to need laborious military training as their natural courage would ensure brave performances on the battlefield (Thuc. 2.39; Ridley 1979: 514–5; Strauss 1996).

²⁶ For a listing of the mostly epigraphic evidence for the attested Athenian officers and activities of the *ephebeia* throughout its history, see Kennell 2006: 15–30.

²⁷ In an inscription from 214 BCE, the ephebes are praised for their *eusebeia* toward the gods (Agora I.7484.30–2 in Tracy 1979) as well as for their *philotimia* and *eutaxia* toward the *boule* and *demos*. Elsewhere in this inscription, the ephebes are praised for performing sacrifices, participating in games as well as the mysteries, and acting as an honor guard for meetings of the Ekklesia. See Perrin-Saminadayar 2007: T3 for more on this inscription.

in the fourth-century decrees, the ephebes at this time do not seem to have been a major part of Athenian religious life (Mikalson 1998: 294). As is usually the case with honorary decrees, the content is formulaic and tends to record little more than the fact of a contest and the names of the victorious tribe of ephebes along with their officers and teachers. However, the specific locations of these ephebic inscriptions suggest more religious activity than can be gleaned from the *Ath. Pol.* The list of places for training is clearly not exhaustive in the *Ath. Pol.*, as the ephebes are praised in the decrees by the *boule* (Reinmuth 2.36–45) and by the Eleusinians themselves (Reinmuth 3.5–9) for their guard duty in Eleusis (Reinmuth 9). In inscriptions found at or associated with specific frontier posts such as Rhamnous and Phyle, the ephebes are said to have done honorable work. Given that Eleusis and Rhamnous were important cult centers, it is likely that the ephebes were being rewarded not only for their orderly behavior in the forts but also for having taken part in religious ceremonies at these locations (Reinmuth 9–10).²⁸ The ephebes competed as a team in games at religious festivals, as seen in Reinmuth 6, 10, and 13. Reinmuth 6 (333 BCE) commemorates ephebic victory in a *lampadedromia* (torch race) and probably reflects their participation in the Nemesia festival at Rhamnous (Parker 1996: 254; Friend 2009: 116–7, 174–5). One ephebic inscription commemorating games (Reinmuth 15; 324 BCE) was found in the Amphiaraion in Oropos (Reinmuth 1971: 69–72; Parker 1996: 254). There was a clear feeling of Athenian patriotism associated with the recovery of Oropos, a contested frontier town given back to Athens after Chaeronea, and a lavish festival to be celebrated every five years was instituted there in 332 BCE.²⁹ Friend (2009: 173–4) argued that the ephebes at this time participated in the Panathenaia, a festival known to be of particular interest to Lysurgus (Plutarch *Mor.* 852b). While the ephebes partook in the Eleusinian mysteries in the second and first centuries BCE (Mikalson 1998: 243–6; see *IG II²* 1006.9–10, 1008.8–9, *SEG* 15.104.12), there is no evidence, epigraphic or otherwise, that they did so in the fourth century BCE.

In the fourth-century decrees the ephebes are typically praised in terms that reflect their military education, so we hear about their exemplary *eutaxia* (“orderliness”: Reinmuth 2), *kosmiotes* (“decorum”: Reinmuth 2), *philotimia* (“love of honor”: Reinmuth 3) and their obedience to their *sophronistes* and to the laws (*peitharchein*; several times in Reinmuth 2). Several of the terms of praise such as *arete*, *eutaxia*, and *sophrosyne* have clearly wider application. The ephebes in 9.13–4 are noted for their *arete*, while the *sophronistes* is also acknowledged in 9.19 for his *arete* toward the tribe and the ephebes.³⁰ Two of these terms

²⁸ There were cults of the *Semnai Theai* at Eleusis and of Nemesis at Rhamnous, and Phyle had ceremonies for Pan and Artemis Agrotera. Reinmuth 10, 11, 13, and 14 were found at Rhamnous or are clearly connected to it, while Reinmuth 3 and 5 were found at Eleusis. See Friend 2009: 174–5 for an argument that the ephebes did participate in the cult of Nemesis at Rhamnous.

²⁹ A crown was awarded to the hero Amphiaraos for watching over the Athenians and others “who arrived to the shrine for the health (*hygieia*) and safety (*soteria*) of all in the land (*chora*)” (*IG VII* 4252.14–7).

³⁰ The *sophronistes* Philonides in No. 19 is similarly singled out “for the sake of his *arete* and *epimeleia* (“care, diligence”).”

appear together in the phrase “for the sake of their virtue and self-control” (*aretēs heneka kai sophrosynes*) three times in the fourth-century ephebic inscriptions (Reinmuth 8.8, 9.4, 9.30–1).³¹ While *eutaxia* primarily evokes good discipline and arrangement of weapons, Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.5.6, 18–22; cf. *Mem.* 4.4.14) connects it to *sophrosyne* as well as notions of restraint and obedience, and *eutaxia* takes on philosophical associations in the Hellenistic period.³² We know from the *Ath. Pol.* that the *paidotribai* and *didaskaloi* provided physical and military training, and Reinmuth suggests that as part of the reforms of the 330s the *sophronistes* functioned as a more general supervisor of behavior and morals (Reinmuth 1971: 130–1). The very titles of *sophronistes* and *kosmetes* imply that they could be offering something beyond military skills and suggest ideas of self-control and civic virtue (North 1979: 125; Ober 2001: 203–4; Marcellus 1994: 85–6). The timing of the decrees in conjunction with Lyscurgan building programs and reforms also points to a broader agenda aimed partly at restoring pride in the polis.

While the *Ath. Pol.* is frustratingly silent on the content of the civic education in the *ephebeia*, the rhetoric of self-control and orderliness in the speeches of the orators as keys to good citizenship uses a constellation of concepts similar to the terms of praise in the ephebic inscriptions. Roisman (2005: 176–85, 193–9) showed how the orators discuss *sophrosyne* in connection with other manly virtues such as courage (*andreia*) (e.g., Dem. 18.215–6; 61.8, 13). For instance, the orator Hyperides, who like Lyscurgus studied under Plato and Isocrates, highlighted the centrality of *sophrosyne*. In a funeral speech delivered in 322 BCE for the dead in the Lamian war, Hyperides said that the youth demonstrated exceptional *arete* in battle (6.8) because they had been brought up to value *sophrosyne* as part of their *paideia*.³³

Ober sees the reformed *ephebeia* as contributing to the public discourse arising out of the law courts, the theater, and the proclamations of the democratic assembly (Aesch. 3.246; cf. Plato *Rep.* 492a–d), all of which provided civic education about key democratic virtues such as *sophrosyne*.³⁴ Friend suggests that since the ephebes could not significantly participate in public life (see *Ath. Pol.* 42.3–5; cf. 63.3) and may not have attended

³¹ Friend 2009: 197 reprinted the text of Reinmuth 8.8 (= E7.8) but noted that *aretēs heneka kai epimeleias* has been suggested as a likely alternative restoration for that part of the line. In Reinmuth 9.4, the ephebes are praised “for the sake of their virtue and self-control,” while in 9.30–1 the same phrase is used to laud the *taxiarch* and the *lochagoi* (junior officers not mentioned in *Ath. Pol.* 42).

³² For *eutaxia* in Xenophon and Isocrates see Marcellus 1994: 149–50, and for its use in Demosthenes see Roisman 2005: 192–5. In a dialogue considered authentic throughout antiquity (and by many scholars today), Plato uses the word once (*Alcibiades I* 122c) as part of a list of Spartan virtues. In the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions* (411d) *eutaxia* means the arrangement “of the parts of the soul with regard to each other.” In a discussion of the virtues in Stoic thought, Diogenes Laertius reports that “*eutaxia* and *kosmiotes* (orderliness) are subordinate to *sophrosyne*” (D. L. 7.126; cf. 7.90 for the connection of health [*hygieia*] and *sophrosyne*).

³³ In a merging of civic and military training, Hyperides in the same passage offers this as the point of education (6.8): “but I think that we all know that we educate our children (*paides*) so that they may become brave men (*andres agathoi*).”

³⁴ Ober 2001: 203–5; cf. 1989: 158–64. On *sophrosyne*, see North 1966: esp. 135–6 and Marcellus 1994: 100–22.

the dramatic festival known as the City Dionysia, the *ephebeia* provided an opportunity for them to gain exposure to these concepts.³⁵

Given the lack of information about the civic content offered the ephebes, scholars have turned to the educational background of Lycurgus himself. Lycurgus reportedly attended Plato's lectures, devoting himself to philosophy as a young man and also becoming a student of Isocrates before his public career commenced (Ps.-Plutarch, *Mor.* 841b). It is probable that Lycurgus was influenced by Plato's ideas of training and education (e.g., *Laws* 813d–e, 834a)³⁶ when guiding the ephebic reforms, but there are importance differences as well as similarities in the systems.³⁷

At the end of the fourth century, the *sophronistes* disappears from the ephebic decrees,³⁸ but this does not mean that the *ephebeia* simply abandoned civic training and returned to its mostly military origins. Like the *sophronistes* and the ephebes themselves, the *kosmetes* too is praised for his *arete* (Reinmuth 1; 330s BCE). An office that may have been partly inspired by the educational manager in Plato's *Laws* (813c1: *ton paidon epimeletes*), the *sophronistes* seems to have been a harbinger of the future focus of the *ephebeia* as ultimately providing a broad-ranging intellectual and physical education.

THE EPHEBEIA IN THE YEARS LEADING UP TO THE FOUNDING OF THE STOA IN 301 BCE

The *ephebeia* is particularly difficult to track in the years between 323 and 306 BCE and once again from 298 to 282 BCE, because of an almost complete inscriptional silence. Whereas there are twenty-eight ephebic inscriptions extant from 334 to 323 (see register in Friend 2009), only one (Reinmuth 16) may date from the reign of Demetrius of Phalerum (317–307 BCE), and the inscriptions return in relative quantity only a few years after Athens was liberated from Demetrius Poliorcetes in 287 and the democracy

³⁵ Friend 2009: 154–5, also 155, n. 41 on the possible presence of ephebes at the dramatic festival in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

³⁶ See Morrow 1960: 327–37 and also the chapter by Patterson in this volume. For the influence of philosophical and rhetorical works on the reformed *ephebeia*, see Marcellus 1994: 85–137.

³⁷ In the *Laws*, Plato suggests a system of frontier guard duty (760b–763c), calling the young guards *neoi* (youths) and *phrouroi* (guardians; cf. *Rep.* 560b). Plato also recommends training young men and women in gymnasia for both light and heavy fighting, suggesting that the instructors be paid out of public funds (813d–e) and that this training be required for all citizens (814c). As with the *ephebeia*, the young men are organized by tribes and have supervisors (760b); however, Plato suggests that the guards be between the ages of twenty-five and thirty, so this system is not training the youngest male citizens.

³⁸ Habicht 1997: 137 suggested that the *sophronistes* was discontinued at some point in the early third century BCE before the Chremonidean war began. Given the drastically reduced number of ephebes in the third century BCE, a *sophronistes* for each tribe is no longer required, and the *kosmetes* acts as the supervisor for the whole group.

restored once again.³⁹ Marcellus (1994:187) suggested that the *ephebeia* may have been suspended several times during those difficult years for Athens. For instance, the life of the comic poet Menander suggests that the *ephebeia* continued during the Lamian war (323–322 BCE),⁴⁰ but it may have been abolished immediately thereafter by the oligarchs in charge of Athens from 322 to 319 BCE (Friend 2009: 180–2). Estimated to cost up to forty talents per annum (Marcellus 1994: 157), the *ephebeia* was also very expensive to maintain in its Lycurgan manifestation, and it may occasionally have been deemed unfeasible to the Athenians as well as unappealing to Macedonian rulers. There are several ephebic inscriptions dating from 306 to 302 BCE (Reinmuth 16–19), which reveal that the *ephebeia* was shortened to one year at least as early as 305 BCE.⁴¹

The compulsory nature of the Lycurgan *ephebeia* was a brief experiment in the last quarter of the fourth century, as the steady drop in numbers indicates. The first class of ephebes since the ousting of Demetrius of Phalerum is estimated at 372 (Reinmuth 17 from 305 BCE; see Reinmuth 1971: 106) and may reflect renewed enthusiasm and optimism but is still far short of the Lycurgan numbers. Hebron, a son of Lycurgus, was involved in this revival of the *ephebeia*.⁴² However, the numbers quickly declined again, and throughout the third century BCE the typical total for an ephebic class in a given year ranged between thirty and sixty.

In addition to the expense involved, Athens may have shortened the *ephebeia* to one year because it was rarely in control of its border forts at this point, so the Lycurgan plan of spending the second year among them would no longer be possible. There are no ephebic inscriptions from these border areas after 322 BCE. Upon winning independence in 287, Athens did not immediately regain control of many of the areas commemorated in the earlier ephebic inscriptions, including Rhamnous, Salamis, and Eleusis (Mikalson 1998: 105). It is unclear when exactly Athens regained control of Piraeus, but it may have been as late as 229 BCE when Athens again won its independence. Therefore, ephebic training from 286 BCE onward probably took place solely within Athens, with the ephebes garrisoned on the Mouseion Hill overlooking the city center.⁴³

³⁹ The fragmentary Reinmuth 16 indicates a very small ephebic class of around sixty, which certainly suggests that the institution was at best vastly scaled down during that period. *IG II²* 1970 was once thought to be from 315 but is now believed to be from 334 BCE. See Pélékidis 1962: 156–7 and Marcellus 1994: 191.

⁴⁰ After serving one year in 323 BCE (along with the philosopher Epicurus), Menander seems to have been granted an exemption for his second year in order to produce one of his plays (Marcellus 1994: 181, 225–33).

⁴¹ The ephebes were enrolled just before beginning the training, while the honorary inscriptions were put up at the end of the training. Since there is only one year between the date of enrollment and that of the honorary decree in Reinmuth 17 (305 BCE), the training must already have been shortened to just one year; see further Reinmuth (1971: 101–2).

⁴² Hebron is also attested as having been an ephebe and ephebic officer himself in 330 BCE (see Reinmuth 12).

⁴³ Guard duty on Mouseion Hill seems to have been a consistent part of ephebic training from 287 through the Chremonidean war (Tracy 1990: 545–6; see *IG II²* 665.12). In an undoubtedly symbolic gesture, Antigonos Gonatas placed a Macedonian garrison on this very hill right after defeating Athens in the Chremonidean war in 261 BCE.

As it was no longer training a consistently large number of young men, the *ephebeia* was not as critical to the military strength of Athens at the end of the fourth century as was expected during the years of its initial revival (334–322 BCE) in the Lycurgan period.⁴⁴ By the late second century BCE, ephebes were expected to augment their military training in part by visiting schools; taking in lectures by philosophers, rhetoricians, and grammarians; and even donating books to the library in the *gymnasion* known as the Ptolemaion.⁴⁵ One inscription (*IG* II² 1043 frag. C.6–9) praises the ephebes for exactly that while also noting their “training in weapons” (*en hoplois gymnasia*). In a first-century BCE inscription, the ephebes are trained in the *gymnasia* by the *kosmetes* and also “devoted themselves with complete discipline (*pasa eutaxia*) throughout the entire year to philosophers” (*IG* II² 1028.34–5).⁴⁶ In another inscription from the first century BCE, ephebes are praised for their “*arete* and their distinction (*philotimia*) with regard to the finest things (*ta kallista*).”⁴⁷ A few lines later, they are praised for their “*eutaxia* and *spoude* (“zeal”) for the pursuits of the finest things.” While left unspecified, such pursuits arguably refer to educational training beyond the scope of particular skill in throwing a javelin or operating a catapult.

The cultural context of the late fourth and early third centuries BCE suggests that Athens may have needed a new focus for its *ephebeia* so that it would appear innocuous to foreign kings but still be a source of civic pride. After Athens lost the Chremonidean war in 261 BCE, the *ephebeia* was allowed to continue, which suggests that Macedon did not find it threatening in its scale and perhaps focus. The conquering Macedonian king Antigonos Gonatas is said to have taken in the lectures of the philosopher Zeno with some frequency (D. L. [Diogenes Laertius] 7.6) and so would not have objected to an institution that offered intellectual training. In the spurious Platonic dialogue *Axiochus*, Socrates says, “When he is enrolled among the ephebes there is the *kosmetes* and a fear of his hands, and then the Lyceum and the Academy and the head of the gymnasium with his rods and countless punishments; and the entire toil of the youth is under the control of the *sophronistai* . . .” (*Axiochus* 366e–367a). The juxtaposition of ephebic training, philosophical study, and the guidance of the *sophronistai* is striking here.

ENTER ZENO

Zeno, I suggest, aided the transition toward more philosophical training by starting a school in the center of Athens at the very time when ephebic training was being scaled

⁴⁴ Rhodes 1981: 495 noted that after the *ephebeia* became voluntary “the military importance of the *ephebeia* then inevitably declined.” The increased use of mercenary soldiers with specialized skills during the fourth century (Sage 1996: 147–61; Hunt 2007: 132–44; Oliver 2007: 173–92) provided another reason that the military aspects of the *ephebeia* became less essential for Athens.

⁴⁵ For discussion of the Ptolemaion with its lecture halls and library as well as the inscriptional evidence for ephebic donations of books to it, see Mikalson 1998: 179.

⁴⁶ The same language appears in *IG* II² 1029.20–1 and 1030.30–1, both from the early first century BCE.

⁴⁷ See *IG* II² 1040.33–4; cf. *IG* II² 1041.28, 1043.53 for similar language.

back and was probably restricted to the city. A native of Citium in Cyprus, Zeno started life as a prosperous trader but at a certain point consulted an oracle about how to proceed to live the best life. He was told to “take on the complexion of the dead. Whereupon, perceiving what this meant, he studied ancient authors” (D. L. 7.2 *ta ton archaion anaginoskein*). While conveying a shipment of purple from Phoenicia to Piraeus, the presumably philosophically minded⁴⁸ businessman was shipwrecked and found himself in Athens where he read about Socrates in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*. On the recommendation of the bookseller, he literally followed the Cynic philosopher Crates who happened to walk by at that very moment.⁴⁹ After studying under Crates (who was a student of Diogenes the Cynic) and attending many lectures of other philosophers such as the Megarian Stilpo and the Academic Polemo, Zeno decided to start his own school in 301 BCE.⁵⁰ His followers were initially called “Zenonians” (D. L. 7.5).

Zeno must have been aware of the often troubled relationship between Athens and her philosophers. Starting his school almost exactly a century after the trial and execution of Socrates at the hands of a recently restored democracy (399 BCE), Zeno also entered the public stage only a few years after the ouster of Demetrius of Phalerum, who was well-known to have been a student of Theophrastus (Aristotle’s successor at the Lyceum). Demetrius of Phalerum was criticized for his educational background partly because of the Macedonian ties and antidemocratic ideas of Aristotle’s school (O’Sullivan 2009: 204–26). A short-lived law of 307 BCE (see D. L. 5.38; Athenaeus 13.610e–f), placing philosophers under state control, is generally thought to have been an action directed against Aristotle’s school in the wake of the overthrow of Demetrius of Phalerum.⁵¹ Theophrastus fled the city when this law was passed (D. L. 5.37–8), while Aristotle himself had left Athens shortly after the death of his one-time pupil Alexander the Great (323 BCE). The accusations against the Peripatetics (as followers of Aristotle became known) were a potent combination of the familiar charges of impiety and introducing new gods (also leveled against Socrates) along with a newer presumed guilt by association with the Macedonians.

As the anecdote of Zeno in the bookshop makes clear, Socrates and the Cynics were the dominant influences on Zeno’s philosophical perspective.⁵² The question of influence

⁴⁸ A merchant who visited Athens on occasion, Zeno’s father Mnaseas is said to have brought back books about Socrates (*Sokratika biblia*) to a young Zeno (D. L. 7.31).

⁴⁹ In another story about why Zeno came to Athens, he was inspired by Socrates’ *Apology* (Themistius *Or.* 23 295d4–7 = *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* [henceforth SVF] 1.9) but it is not specified whether he read the version by Plato or Xenophon.

⁵⁰ Philodemus in his work “On the Stoics” (*P.Herc.* 155 e 339) names the archonship of Clearchus (301/0 BCE) as the beginning of a thirty-nine year period for Zeno that ends with his death in the archonship of Arrhenides (262 or 261 BCE). See Dorandi 1990: 122–3. For analysis of the scanty evidence for the structure of the early Stoic school, see Sedley 2003: 18–20.

⁵¹ The law was rescinded in 306 BCE, and the proposer (Sophocles of Sunium) was fined due to a legal challenge brought by Philon, a student of Theophrastus. The philosophical schools never faced any further legal prosecutions in Athens.

⁵² For the influence of Socrates on Hellenistic philosophy, see Long (1996: esp. 16–23 on early Stoicism). Schofield 2003: 233–5 suggested that Socrates, Diogenes the Cynic, and Zeno all had similar core beliefs but presented them in different ways. On the Cynics, see Desmond 2008 and Branham and Goulet-Cazé 1996.

and counterinfluence can be complex, however, and we must be cautious about trusting ancient sources that often seek clear lines of teacherly succession for Zeno and others (Long 1996: 18–9; Desmond 2008: 16). By engaging people in a public space on matters of philosophical ideas that undoubtedly flouted social convention on occasion, Zeno was literally walking in the footsteps of Socrates and contributing to the public discourse that provided much of the civic education for young people in Athens.⁵³

The specific content of Zeno's philosophy is very difficult to reconstruct in detail as his works do not survive except in later testimonia preserving what were often originally hostile sources.⁵⁴ For instance, the most extensive pieces of testimonia about Zeno's *Republic* are preserved in Diogenes Laertius but largely derive from Skeptic objections to Zeno's work. In this indirect fashion we hear that Zeno recommended among other things the abolition of coinage, the prohibition of public buildings, and uniform clothing for men and women (D. L. 7.32–4; cf. 7.121–2, 129, 131). Zeno's *Republic* was controversial even to other Stoics; we have part of a treatise by Philodemus (*On the Stoics*) in which Stoics display embarrassment about it (Schofield 1991: 3–21). It seems to be an early work displaying the influence of the Cynics while lacking Zeno's later pronounced interest in ethics and living in accordance with nature.⁵⁵

While the intellectual debts of Zeno to the Cynics and Socrates have been addressed, very little scholarship has been devoted to the specific historical circumstances that influenced Zeno's decision to start his own school when there were already two major schools in Athens (Academy and Lyceum).⁵⁶ Due to the state of the evidence, we cannot prove decisively that the founding of the school was in part motivated by changes in the length, location, and now voluntary nature of ephebic training near the end of the fourth century, but there is a plausible case to be made for connecting these events. One of Zeno's contributions to the city may have been to aid the process of demilitarization by setting up a school that by virtue of its very location both recalled the Athenians' great military past and helped to reorient the priorities of the polis. In deviating from the Academy and Lyceum by choosing a central location without any athletic facilities,⁵⁷ Zeno plays a role in shaping the later status of Athens as a political and military

⁵³ Plato's dialogues are generally set within the city walls of Athens. *Euthyphro*, for instance, takes place in the Royal Stoa. Sedley 2003: 8–13 suggested that the nascent Stoic school absorbed and to some extent replaced the minor Socratic movements such as those associated with Stilpo and Diodorus.

⁵⁴ For the testimonia that have been considered to preserve fragments of Zeno's *Republic*, see SVF 1.222, 1.248, 1.252, and 1.259–70. For a comprehensive collection of evidence on Zeno's life and thought, see SVF 1.1–332.

⁵⁵ Zeno reportedly wrote the *Republic* “on the dog's tail” (D. L. 6.4 *epi tes tou kynos ouras*), a reference to the Cynics who take their name from the Greek word for dog (*kyon*), either because of the Cynic reputation for outrageous behavior or perhaps because Antisthenes taught in the Cynosarges (“bright dog”) gymnasium.

⁵⁶ Epicurus (341–271 BCE) arrived in Athens just five years before Zeno, and while Zeno presumably was aware of the Garden it was not yet what we would call a philosophical school at the end of the fourth century. See Clay 1998: 3–104, esp. 55–74; Clay 2009; cf. Frischer 1982: esp. 1–87.

⁵⁷ It may be significant that in his unfortunately lost *Republic*, Zeno reportedly argued against the building of gymnasia in cities (D. L. 7.33). The Academy and the Garden were outside the city walls, while the Lyceum was in a public gymnasium just inside the city walls.

nonentity but as a city prized nevertheless as a center of higher learning. As it also lacked gymnasia, Epicurus' Garden may have influenced Zeno's choice of location, but the two thinkers diverge in their relationship to the polis. While the Garden was known as a quiet place where people lived simply (D. L. 10.10–1),⁵⁸ Zeno's choice for his school's location, the public colonnade known as the Painted Stoa (*Stoa Poikile*), was loud, crowded, and part of public life (D. L. 7.5, 22). This is emblematic of their philosophical schools in that Epicurus advised his students not to get involved in politics (D. L. 10.119 *oude politeusesthai*) but rather to "live unknown" (*lathe biosas* Plutarch *Mor.* 1128c9), while the Stoics "say that the wise man will participate in public life" (D. L. 7.121 *politeusesthai phasi ton sophon*).

The Stoic interest in education can be seen right from the start with works attributed to Zeno and Cleanthes entitled "On Greek Education" (D. L. 7.4, 175).⁵⁹ Zeno's student Sphaerus went to Sparta where at the request of King Cleomenes he revived, or in some senses invented, the famous Spartan system of education known (from that time) as the *agoge* (Kennell 1995: 98–114; see also the chapters by Kennell and Patterson in this volume). Zeno's successor Cleanthes is said to have led the ephebes to a public spectacle (D. L. 7.169). A bronze statue honoring Cleanthes' successor Chrysippus was placed in the Ptolemaion, known at this period as a meeting place for the ephebes (cf. Pausanias 1.17.2). The Stoic Zenodotus was the first philosopher named in an ephebic inscription: "[The ephebes] devoted themselves to studying with Zenodotus in the Ptolemaion and the Lyceum and likewise with all the other philosophers in the Lyceum and Academy throughout the year" (*IG II²* 1006.19–20, 122 BCE). The "other philosophers" are not specifically identified beyond their school affiliations. As we shall see, the unprecedented honors for Zeno make it clear that he is being acknowledged for some sort of service to the *demos* beyond teaching a new sort of philosophy.

While we cannot be certain about the civic content of ephebic training, Zeno's Cynic background would equip him with a notion of embodied *arete* that could be attractive to ephebes. Diogenes the Cynic (ca. 412–323 BCE) affirmed that there were two types of training (*askesis*), one for the body and one for the soul (D. L. 6.70). Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynics (ca. 445–365 BCE), is said to have remarked that "*arete* is a *hoplon* (shield) that cannot be taken away" (D. L. 6.11), perhaps recalling here the early associations of *arete* with military valor in Homeric epic.⁶⁰ Diogenes Laertius even suggests (6.14) that Antisthenes is the source of the most manly aspect of Stoicism (*dokei de kai tes androdestates Stoikes katarxai*) and immediately thereafter quotes an epigram praising the Stoic focus on *arete* for it alone "saves the life and cities of men" (*Anth. Pal.* 9.496

⁵⁸ The Epicurean wise man "will establish a school (*schole*) but not in such a way that would attract a crowd" (D. L. 10.121b8–9).

⁵⁹ In a remark that may indicate his interest in educational reform, Zeno is said at the opening of his *Republic* to have "declared ordinary education to be useless" (D. L. 7.32). As with most of the doxographical snippets of the *Republic*, the ramifications of this statement are difficult to interpret.

⁶⁰ The Stoics similarly believed that the wise man always makes use of *arete* as it cannot be lost (D. L. 7.128 *anapobletos*).

ap. D. L. 6.14). Antisthenes believed that *arete* was a matter of deeds (*erga*) and did not require large amounts of *logoi* or learning (*mathemata*) (D. L. 6.11), and he is said to have inspired the *karteria* (endurance) of Zeno (D. L. 6.15).⁶¹

CHOOSING THE PAINTED STOA

In addition to its location in the center of Athens on the northwest corner of the Agora, the famous paintings that gave the building its name undoubtedly attracted Zeno to the Painted Stoa (*Stoa Poikile*). The paintings on the walls of the stoa all depicted Athenian military victories over Amazons, Trojans, Spartans, and Persians (Pausanias 1.15.1–4; see Wycherly 1953: 25–9; Harrison 1972; Castriota 1992: 28–32, 76–89).⁶² There were also confiscated bronze shields in the Stoa. Given that Athens was attempting to remain neutral and avoid warfare in 301 BCE, the Painted Stoa seems a potentially provocative place to begin a new school. Built in the 460s in the wake of the Greek victory over the Persians, the Painted Stoa was associated with Athenian military glory. Aeschines singled it out for its patriotic appeal: “Proceed in thought to the Poikile, the memorials of all your great deeds are set up in the Agora” (3.186). The presence of Theseus in two of the paintings may also be significant in that he was viewed as the perfect proto-ephebe (Calame 1990; Golden 1990: 43–4; Strauss 1993: 105–29; Marcellus 1994: 167–9; Walker 1995: 94–8), and he is often depicted in art as an idealized youth or ephebe.⁶³ Zeno is then teaching in a place not only recalling Athenian military greatness but also celebrating the exploits of a specific mythical character whose travails the ephebes would later honor and ritually reenact in festivals such as the Oschophoria and Theseia (Strauss 1993: 118–21; Walker 1995: 98–101; Evans 2010: 182–6).⁶⁴ I would also note that the battles depicted

⁶¹ Originally amounting to ten volumes, Antisthenes’ works are unfortunately lost, but among the titles preserved in Diogenes Laertius (D. L. 6. 15–8) there are works on education (*paideia*) as well as several on courage (*andreia*) and one on victory (*nike*).

⁶² Zeno’s notion of a man’s virtue providing the only meaningful marker of superiority would provide a potentially quite instructive contrast to the paintings depicting Greek victories over barbarians (Erskine 2000: 55).

⁶³ Some scholars have argued that the myths of Theseus provided the narrative structure for initiatory rituals and that the *ephebeia* itself may originally have been a rite of initiation (e.g., Garland 1990: 185–7; Walker 1995: 98–104; cf. Vidal-Naquet 1986). For Theseus’ depiction in the fourth-century Atthidographers see McInerney 1994; Harding 2008: 52–72. For the ideological import of the Euripidean Theseus, see Balot 2010: 101–8. For the use of myths and festivals in reconstructing Greek social practices, see Versnel 1994; Parker 2005; Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: esp. 36–50 on Aglauros.

⁶⁴ Friend 2009: 178, n. 149 suggested that the ephebes may have been brought to both the Painted Stoa and the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios (Pausanias 1.3.3–4; Pliny *N.H.* 35.129) to see the inspiring paintings of Theseus helping Athens to victory and standing between Demos and Democracy, respectively. Theseus is described in a speech (ca. 190 CE) by an ephebic official as an *ephebos* who saved his fatherland and greatly helped the citizens and ephebes (*IG II²* 2291a.45–8; see Newby 2005: 198–9).

in the Painted Stoa are all land-based and so would particularly appeal to people being trained in hoplite warfare. There was no known formal naval training in Athens, and it is notable that the *ephebeia* offered only land-based military training, thereby contributing to the high status and praise that continued to be accorded to hoplite bravery throughout the fourth century BCE (Hanson 1996: 306–8).⁶⁵

We do not know as much as we would like about the philosophy students in Hellenistic Athens. Habicht (1994) characterized them as overwhelmingly non-Athenian, pointing to numerous anecdotes in Diogenes Laertius where students come from all over the Greek world to study at the great Athenian schools. He further noted that the majority of the scholars of the Academy, Lyceum, and Stoa were not Athenian (pp. 232–3). While it is undeniable that the heads of the schools and their most famous students were mostly not Athenian, this does not fully account for the typical student population, and there are indications that the philosophers taught large numbers of students. For instance, the Peripatetic Theophrastus is said to have had about two thousand students in his career (D. L. 5.37).⁶⁶ A contemporary of Zeno, the Academic Arcesilaus is said to have had many students, only a fraction of whom are known by name.⁶⁷

Just before he discusses the famous Athenian honorary decree for Zeno, Diogenes Laertius recounts how Athens honored him with the keys to the city walls, a golden crown, and a bronze statue (D. L. 7.6). He then states that “Antigonus (Gonatas) also favored him” and “often invited him to come to his court” (D. L. 7.6). As evidence of the Macedonian king’s zeal for Zeno, Diogenes Laertius presents a letter from Antigonus Gonatas inviting him to visit the Macedonian court. Zeno’s subsequent refusal of the offer on the grounds of age has been labeled implausible (Erskine 1990: 87; Caizzi 1993: 316–9), while the letters to and from Zeno (D. L. 7.7–9) have been deemed forgeries. Erskine uses the episode to show Zeno’s feelings toward the Macedonians generally and specifically Antigonus Gonatas (Erskine 1990: 80). Zeno is said to have sent his students Persaeus and Philonides in his place, which does not seem to demonstrate any particular antipathy toward Antigonus.⁶⁸ While

⁶⁵ Vidal-Naquet 1986 argued that the *ephebe* acts as a kind of anti-hoplite typified by individualistic night expeditions and the use of deception (*apate*), all of which is contrary to the hoplite ethos of communal and honorable combat in the light of day. This theory merges *ephebic* training in the border territories with the transitions young men experience at the threshold of adulthood, but scholars in recent years have taken issue with the image of the *ephebe* as an anti-hoplite: see Krentz 2005; Rawlings 2005: 238–41; Barringer 2002: 47–59. Moreover, Chaniotis 2005 and Ma 2000 pointed out that forts at the borders are hardly the space of subversive activities. I would submit that a structuralist reliance on the binary opposition of savage and civilized as well as the hierarchy of center and periphery seems out of place here. The frontier is a place of pride, and in guarding the borders the *ephebes* show the continuity of the whole territory.

⁶⁶ Wycherly 1962: 10, n. 7 indicated that the verb Diogenes Laertius uses (*apantao*) refers not to a career total of students but rather to the number that could show up to one of his popular lectures.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of philosophy students in Athens between the years 229 and 167 BCE (including a prosopographical catalog of eighty students), see Perrin-Saminadayar 2007: 103–36.

⁶⁸ Persaeus’ connection to the king is also attested in Athenaeus where he is described as “a member of King Antigonus’ inner circle” (6.251c).

the response from Zeno has been analyzed and found to be inconsistent in some ways with Zeno's self-presentation elsewhere (Caizzi 1993: 316–7),⁶⁹ to my knowledge the content of Antigonus' letter and its potential relevance to the honorary decree discussed immediately following this episode have not been addressed. The letter from Antigonus reads in part:

In fortune and reputation I believe that I have the advantage, but in reasoning and education (*paideia*) I fall short . . . So, then, make every effort to meet for conversation with me, realizing that you will be the teacher (*paideutes*) not just of me but of all the Macedonians collectively. For the one who educates (*paideuon*) the king of Macedonia and leads him toward matters of virtue (*ta kat' areten*) will clearly also be training his subjects in manliness (*paraskeuazon pros euandrian*).

(D. L. 7.7)

Including Zeno's response in which he welcomes the king's love of learning (*philomatheia*) and praises him for clinging to "true education" (*alethines . . . paideias*), there are no fewer than four mentions of education in the letters (*paideia* and related words). Whether or not the letters are in fact authentic, the offer from Antigonus is perhaps more revealing of Zeno's reputation as an educator than of the personal relationship between the philosopher and the king. The king's equation of *paideia* with leading someone toward *arete* recalls the phrasing of the praise in the honorary decree for Zeno. I suggest that the letter speaks to Zeno's success as an educator, and this is why Diogenes Laertius directly juxtaposes this episode with the honorary decree praising Zeno for leading the youth to *arete* and *sophrosyne*.

The language and form of the honorary decree itself have been analyzed, and most scholars believe it to be authentic (e.g., Erskine 1990; Habicht 1994: 242; Rhodes and Lewis 1997: 49) even though it is preserved only in Diogenes Laertius.⁷⁰ The general consensus is that the decree was issued posthumously, but there are uncertainties about the timing of both the decree and the death of Zeno. As the decree speaks to Zeno's status in Athens, I quote the majority of it:

Since Zeno of Citium, son of Mnaseas, for many years has been engaged in philosophy in the city and in all other ways has continued to be a good man, urging on toward virtue (*arete*) and self-control (*sophrosyne*) the youth (*neoi*) who came to him for instruction, and since he guided them to the best things, providing his own life to everyone as a model consistent with the arguments he made, hoping for good fortune it has been resolved by the people to praise Zeno of Citium, son of Mnaseas and to bestow a golden crown upon him in accordance with the law for the sake of his

⁶⁹ For the image of Zeno and Chrysippus as well as the general depiction of philosophers in art and text, see Zanker 1995: esp. 90–112.

⁷⁰ For the language of Athenian decrees between 338 and 261 BCE and what it reveals of Athenian relations with Macedonian rulers, see Kralli 2000.

virtue and self-control (*aretēs heneken kai sophrosynes*), and to construct a tomb in the Kerameikos for him at the public expense.⁷¹

(D. L. 7.10–1)

The decree further specifies that the expenses for these honors should be publicly stated “so that everyone may know that the Athenian people honors good men both while alive and after they have died” (D. L. 7.11).

This seems to be the first time that a philosopher is mentioned in an Athenian decree and the honors specified are “unique” and “truly remarkable” (Habicht 1994: 242) for a philosopher, especially a foreign-born one who seems to have chosen to remain a citizen of his native Citium (D. L. 7.12).⁷² The only comparable public honors are for the Stoic Chrysippus (see Plutarch, *Mor.* 1034a). Issued in 261 BCE, the decree for Zeno comes soon after the end of the Chremonidean war, but it is “noticeably apolitical” and concentrates “solely on Zeno’s virtue and his role as educator” (Erskine 1990: 83).

As has been noted (Habicht 1994: 242), the language of praise is Athenian and consonant with extant honorary decrees, but there is something distinctive in the phrasing worth noting in relation to the larger concerns of this chapter. Zeno is praised for exhorting the youth toward *arete* and *sophrosyne*, and the *demos* gives him the golden crown specifically “for the sake of his *arete* and *sophrosyne*.” It is quite common in Attic decrees to praise someone for *arete* as well as *philotimia*, *eunoia*, and *eusebeia*, but it is not nearly as common to cite someone for exceptional *sophrosyne*. In a survey of Attic decrees from 336 to 229 BCE, *sophrosyne* appears only a handful of times and then only in the context of praising ephebes.⁷³ One of these uses of *sophrosyne* comes in an ephebic inscription from 259 BCE (Marcellus 1994: B8 = IG II² 700 + I 2054), which places it very close in time to the honorary decree for Zeno. The collocation of *arete* and *sophrosyne* is even rarer, and, before the decree for Zeno, the phrase “for the sake of virtue and self-control” (*aretēs heneka kai sophrosynes*) appears elsewhere only in two fourth-century ephebic inscriptions (once in Reinmuth 8 and twice in Reinmuth 9).

Not only does this phrasing in the decree clearly recall the specific phrasing used to praise ephebes, but also the emphasis on *sophrosyne* suggests that Zeno offered his students something beyond an education in abstract principles.⁷⁴ It has been argued that the ephebes in

⁷¹ There is some grammatical difficulty and ambiguity in the first two lines of the quotation. I have followed convention in rendering the tenses there, as it seems possible that the decree reflects honors given to Zeno both within his lifetime and after his death. If all the honors specified in the decree were offered posthumously, then the tenses in the first two lines should perhaps be changed. On the debate about the date of Arrhenides’ archonship (262 or 261 BCE), see Haake 2004: 473, n. 17.

⁷² Haake 2004 disputes the authenticity of the decree and argues that while the form is mostly correct the content is more reminiscent of literary biography than of official honorary decrees. A fragmentary Delphic inscription (SIG³ 275 = Tod 1948: 246, no. 187 = Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 392–4, no. 80), dating to the ten years between 337 and 327 BCE, honors Aristotle and his nephew Callisthenes for gathering the list of winners in the Pythian Games (see Tod 1948: 246–8; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 392–5).

⁷³ Reinmuth 8 (twice), 9, 17; IG II² 478, 700.24 (= Marcellus B8.25–6), 1006.63, 1042 frag. C line 6.

⁷⁴ Caizzi 1993: 310 explains the presence of *sophrosyne* in the decree as part of Zeno’s fabled frugality and more generally analyzes the Cynic cast of the portrait of Zeno in Diogenes Laertius. In an epigram by Antipater of Sidon, Zeno is praised specifically because “he found the path to the stars, that of *sophrosyne* alone” (D. L. 7.29 = *Anth. Pal.* 3.104.3–4).

the late Hellenistic and Roman periods were partly functioning to perform the past greatness of Athens (Newby 2005: 168–201). I would argue that Zeno helped to reenvision education as the *future* of Athens in such a way that the *ephebeia* could remain a source of civic pride but one based on a more intellectual sort of training.

CONCLUSION

A six-line epigram praising Zeno composed by Zenodotus, a Stoic from the second century BCE, includes this couplet:

ἄρσενα γὰρ λόγον εὗρες, ἐνηθλήσω δὲ προνοίᾳ,
αἴρεσιν, ἀτρέστον ματέρ' ἐλευθερίας.
For you invented a manly *logos* (and you contended with providence),
a school that was the mother of fearless freedom.

(D. L. 7.30)

Zeno's legacy is strikingly phrased as a masculine discourse that is at the same time the metaphorical mother of freedom.⁷⁵ Zenodotus takes a verb usually associated with physical competitions and uses it metaphorically, thereby mimicking Zeno's creation of a school of thought divorced from physical competition. *Pronoia* (providence), a word used by Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, can also mean "foresight," so the phrase could be rendered "you competed in foresight." Zenodotus would then be slyly complimenting Zeno's foresight in starting a school that focused solely on honing one's intellectual strength.⁷⁶ Zenodotus may here be acknowledging Zeno's specific contributions to ephebic education in Athens, and its new model of masculinity that depends more on arguments than on *aspides* (shields).

Zeno helped transform ephebes from military guards at the periphery to trained thinkers who were by no means peripheral to the future glory and fame of Athens. The story of the *ephebeia* reflects the changing fortunes of Athens herself. While the city won and lost its democratic independence many times, it developed a new kind of identity whose autonomy was not subject to the whims of politics. The legacy of Athens would ultimately be her schools of thought, which continued to flourish well after the days of Zeno. Athens found in Zeno a second chance to respond to a Socratic figure⁷⁷ who

⁷⁵ In a similar gendering of Zeno's thought, Seneca (*ad Helviam* 12.4 = *SVF* 1.15) describes Zeno as beginning the "stern and manly wisdom of the Stoics" (... *Zenoni, a quo coepit Stoicorum rigida ac virilis sapientia*).

⁷⁶ In what may be a remarkable coincidence, the word rendered as "school" (*hairesis*) is attested in a nearly contemporary inscription from Egypt to mean a body of *epheboi* (*OGIS* 176; 98 BCE).

⁷⁷ Athens almost immediately regretted their actions with Socrates, putting Meletus to death and banishing the other accusers of Socrates. They also put up a bronze statue in honor of Socrates (D. L. 2.43).

educated the youth both in his doctrines and in his bold willingness to contribute to civic discourse of the day. This time around, Athens saw the value of an occasionally iconoclastic educator of the youth and honored him and his legacy. Their toleration of a philosopher who associated with a Macedonian ruler⁷⁸ shows that the *demos* took to heart its own long-standing democratic principles of permitting free speech and promoting original thought.⁷⁹

SUGGESTED READING

Dittenberger (1863) remains useful for its collection of sources on the *ephebeia*. While outdated in several respects, Pélékidis' (1962) survey of the institution is still quite helpful. Two recent doctoral dissertations provide excellent histories of the *ephebeia*, one focusing on the Lycurgan period (Friend: 2009) and the other tracing it from its origins to 200 BCE (Marcellus: 1994). Perrin-Saminadayar (2007) provides a comprehensive look at the cultural significance of the *ephebeia* in Athens between 229 and 88 BCE, and a very detailed portrait of the institution in Asia Minor and the Aegean islands is offered by Chankowski (2010), which was unavailable to me at the time of writing (see the review by N. Kennell in the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2012.07.06). Kennell (2006) compiled an extensive register of the mostly epigraphic testimonia for the *ephebeia* in Greek cities throughout the ancient world (see pp. 15–30 for Athens). For a good discussion of the historical circumstances in Athens in the years directly following Chaeronea, including an assessment of the role of Lycurgus in financing an extensive building program, see Burke (2010) (cf. Ps.-Plutarch *Mor.* 841a–4a). For recent attempts to reconstruct the political philosophy of Zeno, see Erskine (1990: 9–42), Schofield (1991: 22–56), and Vogt (2008: 20–64). See Sedley (2003: 9–18) on Zeno's life and his immediate successors Cleanthes and Chrysippus, who maintained some aspects of Zeno's thought while also taking the school in new directions. For a broader discussion of Stoic ethics, see Schofield (2003). On the Athenian philosophical schools as institutions, see Lynch (1972), Frischer (1982), Mitsis (2003), Roskam (2007: 29–82), and Clay (1998, 2009). Aside from the account in Diogenes Laertius (7.84–131), major ancient sources for early Stoic ethics include Stobaeus (2.7.5–12 Wachsmuth-Hense [= vol. 2, pp. 57–116]) and Cicero (*de finibus* 3.16–76). For a good collection of fragments of and testimonia about Hellenistic philosophy, see Long and Sedley (1989).

⁷⁸ Aelian reports that “Zeno often used to conduct business (*epoliteusato*) on behalf of the Athenians with Antigonos” (*V. H.* 7.14). Antigonos is said to have requested through Thraso (the proposer of the decree) burial in the Kerameikos for Zeno (*D. L.* 7.15).

⁷⁹ I would like to thank the editors, Cathy Gutierrez, Cynthia Patterson, and Ralph M. Rosen, for their willingness to read multiple drafts of this chapter and for their many insightful and constructive suggestions.

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CHAPTER 22

THE ANCIENT CHILD IN SCHOOL

W. MARTIN BLOOMER

INTRODUCTION

THE question of why a group chooses to send some of its children to an institution outside the home for instruction that is allegedly uniquely or best available there is complex. Why the ancient Greeks and Romans had schools can be examined first by considering the institutions that developed to assist in training children in what the various societies thought it was important to learn, formally, while young. This is not the same as an account of child learning. Apprentice learning or what a girl learned at home, for example, has left far scantier records than has schooling in the high literary culture. No doubt, in realized and unrealized ways, the child in a city-state learned much by observing and imitating. Where and how the child finds food and comfort, how he or she realizes to use some tools and to make them into toys, and how he or she decides whom to attend and whom to avoid, are subjects that the anthropologist may investigate through rigorous field work over decades.

The historian of education has necessarily more circumscribed goals. A typical consequence is that scholars have been preoccupied with recovering the ancient prescriptions and techniques for training the student in what was even then an archaic, formal, prestige language and its literary modes (so literacy has commanded more attention than numeracy, much less other academic or nonacademic fields of instruction). A further methodological difficulty: the education of children is invested, especially in the Greco-Roman tradition, with symbolic resonances. The state of education has often been taken as a litmus test for the state of civilization. There is then in the ancient sources recurrent lament about the slack habits of the coming generation and nostalgia for a presumed harder, worthier past. In addition, talk and writing about education can serve as a scaffold for larger social and intellectual issues. Thus, Plato in the *Republic* and in the *Laws* offers a blueprint for the reform of society that is, at times, a series of propositions of an idealized education (see Patterson in this volume).

The present chapter attempts the more mundane task of describing what institutions and practices were established to effect the formal training of the child. Practice

is here understood as more than curriculum, so the chapter considers what is asked, encouraged, discouraged, or compelled from the child and speculates a bit about the consequences of this for the child and the future adult. Rather narrowly and generally one might consider ancient education as the entrance of the young into liberal education. This education could be treated in traditional (and more than slightly idealized) terms as the coming into being of the emancipated, critical thinking of the philosophical man. More recently and sociologically, in an important corrective scholars have emphasized that liberal education, *paideia*, was the cultural capital of the Hellenistic citizen. To describe the specific qualities of this capital, its importance for the various societies, its variety over time and place despite the native participants' belief in its constancy, cannot be the goal of this chapter, which will instead sketch the growth of the institution of the school and schooling and then treat this education from the child's perspective as the encouragement of the student to speak of and understand his or her world in certain adult ways and as a training of children in deference, obedience, and the inclination to learn. At the same time the ancient child was learning to value highly certain textual kinds of knowledge and kinds of learning. All along he or she was practicing mature social roles.

The education of children in Greco-Roman antiquity was a topic of importance to the ancients themselves. The development of practices, institutions, and the theorization of these for the education of the citizen class attracted concern and comment from parents, teachers, philosophers, satirists, and statesmen. That much later heirs to the culture of Greece and Rome—medieval, renaissance, and modern—saw themselves as continuing the practice of ancient *paideia* and liberal education has meant that the study of educational ideas and methods is quite advanced and, to a degree, distorted. At several points the study of Greece and Rome has meant preeminently the study of extant, literary texts in school settings so as to achieve a cultural literacy that imitates the skills at speaking, reading, and writing that marked the ideal educated citizen of the ancient Mediterranean. From these two traditions—the ancient modes of reflection on child education and the later belief or hope that the scholar was learning at the knee of Plato or Cicero—recent historical work has sought to free itself. Education was not simply of the free classes; it cannot be reconstructed solely from the prescriptive statements of the philosophical and oratorical theorists. Far greater attention has to be placed on the process of schooling and the material record: learning to read and write and speak; the categorical and even ideological ideas associated with these practices; encouragement and punishment; particular skills and subjectivities.

THE INTRODUCTION OF LITERACY

The complex issue of the introduction of the alphabets is not quite relevant here, because it is instead the dramatic spread of the use of the alphabet for literary and private

purposes from 800 BCE on that indicates the spread of schooling.¹ It may well be that schooling itself was introduced from the Near East since some of the first reading and writing exercises in Greek correspond to Near Eastern practices stretching as far back as we have written records. Gnomology (a collection of sayings attributed to a great sage and collected for the edification of his son) and fable in particular continued as fundamental school forms.

Literate and numerate education, characteristic of the Eastern palace cultures stretching back to at least 3200 BCE and Sumer, developed to train a scribal class in service to a centralized monarchy.² The trained scribe would indeed serve in administration and accountancy of the empire, and there survive both the mature fruits of this labor, all the brick tablets of record-keeping from Sumer to Mycenae and Pylos in the Greek peninsula and for the Sumerian, Egyptian, Semitic, and Hittite cultures some of the curricular materials. These are more interesting than the ostensible purpose—civil service—would have one imagine. Certainly, they were used to teach reading and writing, but they are presented as the wisdom that a father is imparting to his son. So the first reading material is a form of sapiential literature that treats the young reader as if he were the son of a sage. In addition, the young learner is imagined by the text as a young learner. He has now, through this progressively acquired medium, a distinct identity not simply as a reader and writer but as one winning his way to wisdom (and to a position in the bureaucracy). I say winning because social advancement is imagined as possible through the attainment of these school virtues while others of his coevals, without these techniques and insight, fall away. The text is then behavioral and subjective as much as technical. How to learn, how to show respect for one's elders, even how to advance in the perilous task of negotiating court culture are all part of the counsel given by and to be internalized from the text. This sort of wisdom literature is perhaps best known through the Book of Proverbs, whose distant origin lies in Egyptian models.³

The Mycenaean Greeks (ca. 1500–1200 BCE) might well have had similar teaching curricula. With the destruction of those Mycenaean citadels, the depopulation of Greece, and the loss (or at least severe decline) of literacy in the thirteenth century BCE, schools too must have disappeared—for schooling after all was a part of the palace apparatus. In the dark ages, the world in which the epic oral poems were handed down with their distant, imperfect, and idealizing memories of the Mycenaean Greeks (e.g., of the palace kings Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor), there were no schools, or at least the old reasons for schooling had disappeared. To detect schooling in this warrior culture that succeeded the palace cultures we have only the memories of Homer (seventh or possibly eighth century BCE) and the classical Greeks, especially Plato who is so concerned with education and its moral effect upon the city and the individual (see Patterson in this volume). Homer of course has no memory of writing. He imagines that young men

¹ For a review of the issues of the Greek alphabet and an account of its rapid use for literary purposes, see Teodorsson 2006.

² A convenient summary in Kramer 1963: 229–48.

³ Lichtheim 1976: 146–63; Ray 1997.

accompany a hero—so when Odysseus goes to return Briseis to Achilles he is accompanied by a group of young men, and at *Iliad* 1.463 young men, *kouroi*, sing the paean to Apollo. Attending Odysseus they would of course witness good counsel and good fighting and to sing in the liturgy to Apollo no doubt took training. These details and reports that the Spartans maintained old-fashioned ways—among them having musical education—are the clues to the education of the eighth and seventh centuries, the period of the rise of the polis. (See Kennell in this volume on musical education in Sparta.)

For this period it is important to stress that an “alphabet” is not simply introduced or imported, especially to those who were not literate before (or even to those Greeks who might have been using a syllabic system). Equipment and techniques and a person adept with these need to be imported. The evidence we do have for the rapid spread of literacy for private and literary purposes attests to the spread of teaching expertise. There are mythic stories that locate the introduction of culture in the in-between space of legendary time: Cadmus the wandering man-serpent founder of Thebes invented the alphabet; Achilles the warrior between men and the gods was taught by the sage Chiron, the centaur midway man and beast (Homer, *Iliad* 11.832); and Heracles, again between man and god, was a poor student of music and killed his teacher (Apollodorus, *Library* 2.4.9). Aside from such stories of mythic founders, which are important for the continuing high estimation of education, at a more concrete level the Greeks imagined that they always had had schools; that is, their memories of their living in city-states presume that the polis always had a school.

The genesis of Western schooling is a feature of the development of the city-state: Greeks emerging in the late ninth century from the so-called dark ages after the collapse of a Mycenaean palace culture ca. 1200 BCE, through contact with the more advanced and affluent cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, developed a series of social institutions that for convenience we call the city-state. Thus schooling is one of several collective activities of the citizen class: common decision-making, the collective fighting array of hoplite warfare, and a communal religious and festival life. Indeed, there seems to have been a schooling for these three essential features of the polity. Free young men received some training, it seems close to an apprenticeship, from an older man in skill in giving counsel, skill at arms, and the crucial liturgical skills: singing and dancing. Plato writing about 380 BCE remembered that the older education consisted solely of gymnastics and music (*Rep.* 376e). I wish to posit a reason for the change in education between the older style of the early city-states and the period in which Plato lived (more broadly the classical period from around 600 BCE to the 300s BCE).

THE INTRODUCTION OF SCHOOLING

The reintroduction of literacy is not simply a reflex of expanding trade contacts but also an instance of the importation of Eastern technologies that the aristocratic class of the archaic city-state used increasingly for social distinction. Artistic techniques, luxury

goods, the symposium—that upper-class male drinking party with song and games—even new ways of conceiving identity through the display allowed by such goods or by new temple design, with a more monumental architecture, for instance, were part of this so-called Orientalizing Revolution.⁴ The Homeric poems themselves are a more monumental version of the earlier oral poetry and may well reflect the aid of writing in composition. For the traditional education responding to this developing culture of social distinction within the city-state and of cultural and social relations among the elites of different city-states, literacy affected two areas in particular: song with music and song without. Education helped detach these traditional modes from their original performance contexts and move them to new contexts, new uses, and a wider, nonperformance bound audience. We have on vases scenes of musical education (see Dillon in this volume). Later Plato, like many Greeks, believed that particular kinds of music aroused particular emotions. Music, then, was educational in the strongest sense since it affected the soul and the behavior of the student (for Plato music provides the readiest, most powerful access to the soul; see *Rep.* 3.401d). Song with music became the greatest achievement of late archaic literature—lyric poetry. Song without music was preeminently the Homeric poems. Literate education helped train the boy and the girl in these two important cultural modes.

I will give two instances of new cultural contexts for these modes: the school of the great poet of Lesbos, Sappho; and the introduction of the Homeric poems to the greatest civic festival of Athens, the annual Panathenaic procession in honor of Athena. The poetry of Sappho, who wrote about 600 BCE, describes what she terms a *thiasos*, a religious community of younger girls and of herself. This is a distinctly educational community of aristocratic girls who forge a life and identity together, through music, song, dance, and what they might have termed the search for beauty against the customary values of the male world. Like school itself this community does not last; it is set between childhood and marriage.⁵ Second, the tyrant Peisistratus introduced the performance of the Homeric poems into the Panathenaic festival at Athens in the mid-sixth century. In addition to demonstrating the recontextualization, development, and manipulation of traditional material for political purposes, this event typifies the prominence that the Homeric poems will achieve, not through their original composition in Ionia and performance at religious festivals but through new contexts from the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. The most discussed new context is the introduction of the poems to the Panathenaic festival by the Peisistratid tyrants of Athens,⁶ but the new venues of the poems include first the school itself, where the poems would be memorized, glossed, copied, and recited, and second, itself a consequence of schooling, the development of a reading public and of the idea of literature.

⁴ Burkert 1982.

⁵ On the nature of the group led by Sappho see Bowra 1961: 187–8; Marrou: 1956: 34; Klinck 2008.

⁶ The nature of this introduction, especially whether it involved the first writing down of the poems, remains a matter of controversy; see Janko 1992: 29–32 with bibliography.

I have emphasized the introduction of schooling because it is important to state clearly the great adaptation of scribal education to the needs of the evolving citizen society of the polis. Second, crucial, long-lasting ideas about the ideology of education stem from this early period and its interpreters. The practice of the schools can be discovered only from the much richer historical record of the Hellenistic period through the late Roman period (the fourth century BCE to the sixth century CE). With the eclipse of the city-states and the rise of Alexander's successor kingdoms and ultimately of Rome, school practice became more textual and more uniform. Indeed, in the far-flung and disparate world of the Hellenistic era, school education became the badge of Greek identity.⁷

I shall not here trace the historical development of this complex story. Instead, I shall focus on the commonalities of approach in the schools and try to describe what the consequences of this system of schooling were, especially for the experience of the child learner. But a final word on the early period and on educational idealization and nostalgia: the cultural memory of the origins of an institution can still be important even if the historian knows them to be wrong, that is to say, the Greeks' attribution of a mythic origin to schooling reflects important ideological ideas about schooling. The Greeks remembered such figures as the centaur Chiron as the founder of education. They would also consistently remember and consider Homer to be the educator of the Greeks (e.g., Plato, *Rep.* 10.606). In part, this second feature is a factor of the schools themselves: the texts of Homer were taught in the schools (whereas in the centuries before the texts that antedate Homer and Sappho were part of an oral tradition of liturgy and religious/community festival). So the institution of the school helped to produce literature from religious forms. In so doing, "literature" does not lose all its original religious and social meaning, and by encoding memories of an earlier system of education and of values it becomes a conservative force, not in the sense that the old mores are necessarily maintained but that a connection of the learner to an authoritative past becomes an important medium for identity. To an extent, the Greeks are Greeks and not Athenians, Spartans, or Corinthians, aristocrats or commoners, because they think that Homer is their educator. Homer is Hellenic *paideia*, to use their term. What this means in detail I cannot explore here, except to say that it reveals the high valuation put on literate education and reveals a great shift, a movement of learning into the institution of the school. Here lies human culture, the gift of the centaur Chiron but decidedly an essential of what it means to be human.

Female as well as male, one hastens to add, for an important consequence of the modification of the Near Eastern scribal education to the needs of the citizens of the poleis was the education of girls. Scholars have lamented a lack of evidence for girls' education. It is true that the sources (as we have seen with Quintilian) very often presume that the student is a (free) boy and that educational materials are written with

⁷ On the iconography of this important idea see Marrou 1964; the phenomenon as a cultural practice is analyzed in Whitmarsh 2001.

boys as the leading character (so the elder Cato is said to have written educational materials for his son; the first reading text that adopts his name, the *Distichs of Cato*, imagines its addressee as a boy). This prejudice combined with the lack of interest in girls' experience of education and the fact that girls did not pursue the same advanced education as did boys (in the rhetorical schools) does constitute a great lacuna (the literary record is far more interested in what the vast majority of its authors studied at the apex of their training). Customarily, this is offset by noting the expectation of literacy for women of the upper classes in two ways: (1) by mentioning famous learned woman (e.g., real women such as Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi who supervised their excellent education, or Sempronia, the mother of Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus, who was expert in Greek and Latin literature but danced and sang "better than a respectable woman," as Sallust says [*Catiline* 25.2], or the literary woman of the poets' pages, the *puella docta*) and (2) by citing the few passages that attest to girls and boys attending school (e.g., Martial 8.3.16; Ovid *Tristia* 2.369–70). More positively and broadly, the range of evidence suggests the presence of girls' education in the early poleis in what are clearly prominent venues with prominent families, a systematic equal education of boys and girls in the elementary schools of the Hellenistic period, and for the Roman world a diverse set of practices ranging from the presumption of education in literacy for free girls to demands that young women should study philosophy and to the many educated women recorded in the literary sources. For the early period there are also records of the education of Spartan girls, remembered as old-fashioned and peculiar.⁸ There are in addition promising new interpretations of the actual records left by educated women, a series of letters by girls and women examined by Roger Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore.⁹ There is considerable evidence for competitions and public displays of schoolgirls. These are of civic importance as annual festivals. Sappho prepared and led such competitions in singing and dancing.¹⁰ Such performances have left only traces, but the material record for the education of girls and women is eloquent. To take just two Roman examples: the epitaph of the eight-year-old Roman girl Magnilla records that she was "learned beyond her years." A funerary relief, perhaps from the Augustan period, shows the schoolmaster Furius Philocalus flanked by a male and a female student.¹¹ The letters and the commemorative monuments reflect a pride in female literacy, on the part of a variety of agents. This pride is presented not as a singularity—like a dog who walks on his hind legs—but as exemplary behavior.

⁸ See the discussion of Plato, *Laws* 804e in Ducat 2006: 103–31 and the general discussion with considerable attention to physical education at Ducat 2006: 223–47; also the chapters by Patterson, Kennell, and Dillon in this volume.

⁹ Bagnall and Cribiore 2006.

¹⁰ Marrou 1956: 33–5. Sappho was not the only such teacher. For records of choruses (male, female, and mixed), see *ibid.* (p. 136).

¹¹ *CIL* 6.21846, *CIL* 10.3969, reproduced and discussed by Rawson 2003: 45–7, 160–1 (whose first chapter "Representations," pp. 17–92, is extremely valuable).

THE PHYSICAL SCHOOL AND ITS DEMANDS

We can imagine, following the guide of the Roman theorist Quintilian, that the Roman boy or girl of the first century CE came to grammar school about the age of seven, already knowing the alphabet.¹² Reading, writing, and arithmetic were learned here. The child would learn to write and then read Greek; Latin followed. After basic literacy (including memorization and recitation) the child learned grammar, mythology, and literary criticism all together while reading a poetic text and listening to the teacher's exposition. A set of exercises from aphorism to fable and description, themselves increasingly complex narrative building blocks, led to the finished speech.¹³ At the final stage of declamation, the advanced boy learned a system of composition and delivery of mock deliberative and legal speeches.¹⁴ Quintilian imagines that the child's mind, like his body, is soft and susceptible to influence, good and bad. The title of his great work, the *Institutio Oratoria*, reveals method and purpose—the child is to be shaped or even constructed into an orator.

Quintilian provides in detail an ideal education, beginning with first schooling and following the child to his maturation in the rhetorical schools. By his time the ancient world abounded in writings on rhetoric, and Cicero had left an authoritative collection of treatises on the subject. Uniquely, however, Quintilian offers an account of early education. Indeed, his focus on shaping curriculum to the stages of a child's capacities has left us a document as important for its account of the psychology or process of learning as for the details of the Roman curriculum. The child—he consistently calls the student a boy although girls received the same grammatical training—grows to manhood not through the inevitable forces of biology but by the careful attention of teacher and father to the graduated curriculum. Epic poetry, for instance, which is read early on, strengthens the boy's *animus*, his mind but also his emotional center (the word also means courage or fighting spirit). Quintilian stresses that education makes one a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, a good man skilled at speaking (he reuses a famous phrase of the archetypically Roman Roman, the old censor Cato); education is thus not a morally neutral skill at speaking. The goodness and the virility are also expressed by the abstract noun that defines that man, *virtus*, virtue. It is correct to say that Quintilian is interested in ethical formation, but more precisely he wants to develop the speaking capacity (and the thinking process that finds and structures this) that discovers the right course of action and persuades the self and others to adopt it. This is what a good man like Cato

¹² Marrou 1956: 142; Bonner 1977: 35, 41. There is ample evidence of the great families of the Roman Republic and later the emperors employing tutors at home: Bonner 1977: 23–34. The ancient testimonia describing the processes of learning to read and write are succinctly set out by Cribiore 1996: 139–44. See also Cavallo 1989 and Johnson 2000.

¹³ On *progymnasmata*, see Patillon 1997; Webb 2001; Bloomer 2011: 123–9.

¹⁴ On declamation, see Berti 2007; very briefly, Bloomer 2006.

possesses. Just as a sentence must have the right word for the particular content and audience, the teacher must bring the right exercises and texts at the moment appropriate to the child's learning stage. Content, expression, and persona are intimately, even transparently, interconnected. Certainly, grammar was important because Quintilian was teaching an elite Latin to an elite class so that the class would remain discrete and would continue to produce the communicatively well-trained governors of the empire. But along with this instruction came the conviction that the product of this instruction, this well-grammared speaker, was the authentic Roman. Thus, role-playing was essential, especially in the final stages of the curriculum at the declamatory schools, where the boys, but not the girls, imagined they were an adviser to a great man at a pivotal point in history (in the exercise known as the *suasoria*) and then played the lawyer in a case, often extreme, which pitted important Roman social and familial agents against each other (fathers and sons, good stepmothers and ungrateful fathers) in a situation that pushed basic familial, social, and legal categories of loyalty and responsibility to their logical limits (the *controversia*).

But what place was the child coming to? In the ancient world "school" is hard to define, especially in its physical makeup. To list a few well-known references to the physical place of school, presented chronologically: the collapse of the roofs of two schools on Aegean islands in the fifth century BCE with ensuing loss of life is reported by Herodotus (6.27.2) and Pausanias (6.9.6–7); the first teachers to offer instruction in Latin—Ennius and Livius Andronicus—are said to have taught at home and outside their homes;¹⁵ Quintilian closed his famous school at Rome after he became instructor to sons of the imperial family; Augustine taught school when he came to Rome (*Confessions* 5.12). Clearly, the scale of a school could vary from the building on the island of Chios whose collapse killed 120 boys to the house of a freedman at Rome (or of his patron?). The best evidence of an architectural place of schooling, which includes dedicated rooms with benches, teacher's seat, and painted lessons on the walls, comes from a recent excavation in Egypt.¹⁶ But the school could take a variety of forms. I exclude here the gymnasium, that typically Hellenistic civic structure where physical exercise occurred and where at times and in certain places ephebes trained (originally, a two-year military apprenticeship for seventeen- and eighteen-year-old Athenians, the institution of the *ephebate* spread broadly in Hellenistic cities; see the chapter by Casey in this volume). The gymnasia are relevant here for their records of prizewinners at competitions, not simply those of the ephebes but also of younger boys and girls, although sites of performance need to be distinguished from sites of instruction.¹⁷ The wrestling schools frequently mentioned by Plato certainly offered formal instruction, and there is extant a manual of instruction for the wrestling master.¹⁸ In addition, they are remembered as sites of

¹⁵ On these teachers at Rome: Kaster 1995.

¹⁶ See Criboire, Davoli, and Ratzan 2008; Bloomer 2011: chapter 2.

¹⁷ Places of recitation, Dalzell 1955; places of declamation, Bonner 1949: 39–40; possible performance site at Pompeii, Laurence 1996: 25–6.

¹⁸ Marrou 1956: 124.

socialization and seduction for boys and men.¹⁹ The education here afforded is slightly beyond the stage of our focus, but such physical education offered supervised, play versions of combative, agonistic male roles introduced by the study of literature. Again the boys play at being Achilles or Leonidas, observed in their toil by older men. The element of display is important and related to early school performance as a competition and instruction characterized by the strong (and at times physically coercive) relationship between older teacher and young ward.

Leaving home, the Roman child likewise found his or her school in a variety of places. (Homeschooling was clearly an option, of which Quintilian disapproved. Cicero, for instance, took the education of his son and nephew into his own hands, but the boys clearly had tutors before and after this and had been to school; Cicero had met his friend Atticus at school).²⁰ If well-off, the student was accompanied by a pedagogue to a fairly grand place; the grandest we know of is the atrium of a villa on the Palatine hill in Rome where Verrius Flaccus taught the grandsons of the emperor Augustus. In the Athenaeum at Rome, built by Hadrian, there was a school for liberal studies (Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 14.2–3). Slaves for the emperor's bureaucracy were trained in special quarters in the imperial palace, the *paedagogium* (see Sigismund-Nielsen in this volume). There is evidence for far more modest schooling: the child might go to a rented shop or a balcony room. A lost wall painting from Pompeii includes depiction of a school amid a bustling street scene in the heart of the city. Graffiti at Pompeii reveal the children exhibiting and mocking their school learning.²¹ Such modest places perhaps did not outlive their teacher, and without specialized architecture are all but invisible, even to the archeologist.

In the Roman world school was often a small business with relative ease of access (since there was no “credentialization” for teachers and since facilities were flexible and materials modest), a need for networking, and some difficulty in getting paid. Without state support and depending on fees, the schoolmaster often educated at home. His requirements were slim. In the rhetorical school of Quintilian it is clear that at times the student body listened to the performance of individual students (the master teacher disapproved of the practice of students' show of enthusiasm at each rhythmic close of their fellows' declamation: Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 2.2.12), but the grammar school had no need to imitate the adult scenario of orator and audience. What it required and what defined it was a relationship between master and pupils. Performance at the grammar school, to judge from the depictions on Greek vases, required that the child come to the teacher's chair and recite or read to him or her.²² Practice at school required at a minimum a space for the student to sit, balancing his wax tablet on his lap, reading out loud, perhaps encouraged, prodded, or worse by his pedagogue, if he had one, to read, memorize, write. To judge both from the ancient evidence and from Qu'ranic schools

¹⁹ Dover 1978: 54–7.

²⁰ See Treggiari forthcoming. On tutoring in the Roman world see Rawson 2003: 160–2.

²¹ Gigante 1979: 23–34.

²² Scenes of school can be seen on Greek vases: Beck 1975.

today that similarly emphasize reading, writing, memorizing, and performing the text, school could be a noisy place. While this may seem to the modern silent reader to be disruptive, in fact it might develop both the vocal abilities and the intensity of focus that allowed the ancient orator to project his words in a large or even open place over the booing of his enemies and comings and goings of an audience far more fluid and probably more talkative than the modern opera audience.²³ The grammar school was ultimately preparing powerful speakers but had no need to imitate the scope of their venues.

In addition, the place of the grammar school did not have the physical requirements of the modern school, which prizes a closed room with separate seating, a clear line of sight for the (most often single) supervising teacher, and acoustics sufficient that the teacher and any pupil can communicate. In antiquity, no desks were required. At a minimum the student needed writing materials: a fragment of a clay pot or roof tile or a piece of wood and a brush pen or a wax tablet and a stylus, pointed at one end to incise the letters, flattened at the other to erase. At a minimum the teacher sat on a chair, thus raised above the children sitting on the ground (in grander schools on benches) and with his head at about ear level for the child summoned to his chair to perform a lesson. He had to have some texts; however, they need not be complete (certain purple passages recur in the extant school exercises), and certainly not all needed to be written. Some he might have memorized, and some he might have written on papyrus rolls. On a grander level—that reflected in the education of prominent Greeks and Romans whom we know about from the literary sources and as described in the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian and the *De liberis educandis* attributed to Plutarch—the teacher would have had a working library from Homer to the orators and commentaries on these texts, as would the students' parents at home.²⁴ The grandest houses would have literate experts as well: the pedagogue, a professional secretary like Cicero's freedman Tiro, even a resident philosopher, and a library or a portion of the house with books and statues of the Muses or frescoes of Menander or tragic or comic masks or scenes from tragedy and comedy.

But let us return from the literary and communicative society to which education aspired to the children in the schoolroom. School equipment might include wooden tablets with the letters incised for the beginner to trace, alphabet blocks, inkwells with inscribed alphabets, abaci. There is some evidence for a map in a late Roman school.²⁵ Again, however, the real equipment of the ancient school has been somewhat overlooked. For a boy or girl might bring to school as his or her own possession the slave pedagogue and the *capsarius*, the slave who carried the *capsa*, a cylindrical box that held papyrus rolls. Negotiating the papyrus roll was a challenge for the young, perhaps especially for boys with

²³ See Bray 1986.

²⁴ Jerome, *Adversus Rufinum* 1.16, reminds his addressee of the commentaries he had read under his famous teacher Donatus.

²⁵ At Autun the rhetorician Eumenius about the year 300 described a map for a school: the Latin text and English translation in Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 171, 563.

fine motor skills not so advanced as their sisters. Papyrus seems to have always been expensive, and the roll had to be unrolled with the left hand and taken up with the right hand. Quintilian recommends that the child manage the top of the roll with his chin while resting the bottom on his lap.²⁶ The pedagogue or *capsarius* might have supervised this as well as provided other tutoring and discipline and guided the walk to and from school. One surmises that they were a help with learning to write. Writing did require a flat surface, brush, ink and water, and a sponge or rag to erase. The potential for accidents seems large (lamps were brought to school as well), as do the possibilities for mischief. Lucian recalls that he made little oxen and horses and human figures from the wax of his tablets (*Dream* 2). Fire, ink, oil, ostraca, wax, papyrus, brush, stick-like stylus, tablet, roll, clay lamp: all sound like a lot to carry and a recipe for invention. On the other side, so to speak, the teacher sitting in his high chair had the *ferula* or *virga* (the cane but not the whip—the *flagellum*—with which slaves were beaten).²⁷ Herondas in a literary mime (something like a bit of prose satire) has a mother drag her truant son to the schoolmaster for a beating. Horace remembered his abusive teacher whose name, Orbilius, became a byword for strap-loving “teachers.” A funerary relief in Verona depicts a schoolmistress with her whip (Inv. A. O. 9.6622, first half of the first century CE).²⁸ Whereas Plutarch and Quintilian inveighed against corporal punishment, it was standard practice for the school. A common writing exercise had the student write, “Work hard lest you be beaten.”²⁹

We do not have to imagine that education always worked smoothly and progressively. Then as now not everyone reached the end desired by parent or teacher and so fully and ideally described by the theorists and advocates. There were clearly educated free men and women who did not write well and professionals, slaves, and freedmen who wrote expertly. A wooden tablet from Vindolanda, the Roman fort on the Stangate south of Hadrian’s Wall in Britain, has a birthday invitation written competently enough, yet at the bottom the shaky signature seems to be the work of the lady inviting her friend. A slave has probably written the body of the letter for her.³⁰ Likewise, there is much evidence for important men, Pliny the Elder and Cicero for instance, dictating to professionals (most famously, Pliny the Younger tells of his uncle dictating to his slave the details of Vesuvius as it erupts: *Epist.* 6.16). No doubt these masters could write well and swiftly, but a staff helped with the volume of their work. Still, it is important to remember that education did not mean autonomous literate skills or, rather, that in the ancient

²⁶ Birt 1907: 2–19 describes the process of reading a papyrus roll.

²⁷ A famous picture of Roman students and master in their chairs comes from a relief in Trier, reproduced by Bonner 1977 as the cover illustration and figure 9 (p. 56).

²⁸ This female educator was not alone: Rawson 2003: 165–7 discusses four women among known pedagogues. On female teachers, see Cribiore 2001: 78–83.

²⁹ On the issues of corporal punishment see Saller 1994: 133–53; Bloomer 2011: 53–80. See also Vuolanto in this volume for corporal discipline in late Roman schools.

³⁰ See Bowman 1998: 56–7; McDonnell 1996: 474–6; and especially important for methodology and conclusions on women writing, Cribiore 2001: 86–101; for the range of writers and uses of writing in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, see Baginall 1995.

world the literate and numerate skills that education inculcated were supported by slave and servant labor during and after the educational process. Indeed, the disposition to treat another human being as an instrument of one's reading and writing was a skill learned at the finest schools. And helpers were needed for the various equipment and the processes of reading, writing, preparing, rehearsing.

An idealized account of the student's day is found in the late antique bilingual exercises (*hermeneumata*), which depict the child's life as a series of encounters, from waking and ordering his slave to attend him to going to school, even meeting a child enemy on the street.³¹ Such exercises were vocabulary exercises and so list more things than the average student might need or encounter, but their most remarkable pedagogic feature is that they encourage the student to imagine himself at the center of an educational world doing distinctive work that will repay him later. The world seems made for him and waiting for him. This integrated vision was underscored by the educationalist's sense that the curriculum was an integrated, progressive whole. Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 7.10.8–9) says that the teacher is to demonstrate the reasons for the sequence of exercises. Another piece of the curriculum, the preliminary exercises known as the *progymnasmata*, offers characteristic encouragement. Aphthonius in discussing the *chreia* (*Progymnasmata* 5), the sayings tale, explains the words of Isocrates, that the root of education is bitter, the fruit sweet, with a rationale characteristic of the ancient school: suffer as a boy, profit as a man. He offers this justification of education inset, as the exegesis of an exercise, into the very toil of education: "But by childhood experience of [punishment from teacher, pedagogue, and father], grown to manhood the student wins the crown of virtue." On the other hand, if a student out of cowardice flees his master, runs away from his father, and eludes his pedagogue, he loses all hope of eloquence; eloquence and rationality are lost with the assumption of fear.

The end to which all the boy's, teacher's, pedagogue's, and family's effort aims is the production of a confident, resourceful speaker. Pseudo-Plutarch in the *De liberis educandis* describes the bad influences to be avoided in this training.³² More positively, the massive work of Quintilian details the series of exercises and studies that will bring the child to maturity, whereas the more slender collection of sample exercises, the *progymnasmata*, give some of the flavor of the graduated curriculum and the constant encouragement offered to offset the drudgery of schoolwork.

A TYPICAL EXERCISE

Having come to such a place and with such equipment and with school fees paid, what did the student do? He or she had begun with the names of the letters, now moved on to recognize and reproduce their shapes, to write the simplest possible combinations

³¹ On these exercises (referred to also by Vuolanto in this volume), see Dionisotti 1982; Bloomer 2011: 181–90.

³² See Bloomer 2011: 58–65, 72–6.

of these (the nonsense syllables, e.g., ba, be, bi, bo, bu; bab; beb, bib), to study written sentences whose meaning or at least some of whose vocabulary was beyond him. Quintilian is quite clear that the young student lacks the judgment to understand why he does what is set him. The child is marked by a powerful memory, an imitative faculty, but not the ability to discriminate what should be imitated.³³ Thus, encouragements and games are necessary. The first three exercises of the *progymnasmata*—maxim, *chreia*, fable—have a clear relationship. First the student learned a general truth pithily expressed; then, with the *chreia* (the sayings tale), he attributed such a pungent sentence to a sage as his response to a challenge. With fable, narrative became more complex. Now two or three speakers must be given lines, and a maxim would often be used to summarize the point. Certainly, the student practices with the formal building blocks of narrative, but he and she also learn “wisdom”—the traditional fare of the *gnomai* (maxims) and *chreiae* and fables where fortune is ever slippery and (verbal) craft seems the only possible redress. The world and its agents (in fable a predatory place of hunger with fox, lion, or some other duplicitous and violent stand-in or, in a typical *chreia*, the foolish or ostensibly powerful man who challenges Diogenes or Socrates) are out to trick the student. Often, these tricksters mistake the value of education: so Aristippus responds to the man who wanted to hire a cheap, ignorant pedagogue, “then you will have two slaves.”³⁴ The *Distichs of Cato*, a collection of sayings dating from the first or second century CE, are full of protreptic to education: “Fortify your mind with precepts; do not stop learning: for the unlettered life is a likeness of death” (3.1).³⁵ In addition, this school literature prepares the way, in dribs and drabs, for literature. The one-liners are often excerpted from poetry or in the case of the *Distichs of Cato* modeled on lines of Horace, Vergil, and Ovid. Verse form, kinds of argument, and rhetorical figures are being learned as well.

We should also take seriously the ancient claim that education and specific exercises made the student moral.³⁶ I do not mean that words and genres work in the psychagogic ways imagined by the ancient philosophers and rhetoricians, that, like certain music, certain modes of speech moved the soul to specific ends and that all the child needed to do was to imitate the verbal forms and his mores would thereby be shaped. Rather, school exercises were a moralizing mode—a way to model values and behavior and to provide the terms, agents, and plots to interpret actions, words, and motives as moral or immoral. In this way, even if the student broke his wax tablets or made little animals of the wax or dreamed of murdering his teacher (a poem of Prudentius commemorates such an event),³⁷ educational discourse emerges as the authoritative medium

³³ See, e.g., Quint. 1.3.1; Bloomer 2011: 93–8.

³⁴ Ps.-Plutarch, *De liberis educandis* 5A.

³⁵ The translation is mine from the standard edition of the *Distichs* (Boas 1952). On the *chreia* see Hock and O'Neill 1986.

³⁶ Patillon 1997: xix–xx discusses the ancient claims for the moral effect of fables on the young.

³⁷ Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 9 (a story of the schoolmaster-saint Cassian of Imola).

for fashioning the self and for evaluating the self and that self's relations with family, friends, enemies, dependents, and superiors.

CONCLUSION

The difficulty of the ancient school may repel most readers. While education was certainly onerous, inefficient to modern eyes, and at times violent, there is a certain honesty about the time and resources required. Education is not easy, quick, or "natural." Yet following Aristotle, the ancients believed that the human being naturally wants to know and to be educated; theorists from Plato to Quintilian believed that the best man was the educated man and that education could make a man good. The modern is considerably more skeptical. While there are some enthusiasts for a "classical" education, to treat the modern child as the ancient would require that one teach children to read by setting them a piece of Shakespeare, Milton, or even Chaucer, an impossibility after the research of Basil Bernstein and the reformers his work animated.³⁸ But consider what such an inefficient pedagogy with its restricted code effects (in addition to replication of dominant social protocols): at the outset of studies it would discourage vernacular paraphrase or summarization and demand instead a faithful, verbatim copying. The child begins by imitating, whether through writing or reciting or speaking, as if he were the undistorting medium for the text. Indeed, he is but a copy of the text, as much a support of reading as the papyrus or the wax that held the letters.

The child's particular capabilities, as Quintilian described them (1.3), were a quickness to retain and a quickness to parrot what was set. Such an interpretation of what is childlike reflects the importance of memory and of oral delivery in ancient literate culture but is itself an idealized simplification of the child as learner. The good student (on the ancient estimation) at this stage seems almost invisible; that is, his performance is identical to his master's script. He leaves no mark upon the text to be reproduced. But this understanding of the child as a sort of transparent, almost mechanical textual presentation has implications for the future. Starting a child on Homer (or with the Bible or Qu'ran) begins the familiarization of difficult texts. The centrality of large, archaic, and complex literary works in different curricula marks the texts as cultural icons but also as difficult yet daily texts, which require revisiting and reworking and whose reading is never complete. It is decidedly not the case that throughout their various histories such complex works were given the very young for lack of other materials. The process of gaining basic literacy rehearses the future, lifelong textual practices of the student. Thus, ease of access or accommodation of linguistic complexity are

³⁸ Bernstein 1964; see also Bloomer 2011: 114–6 (with bibliography).

unnecessary, however striking or even upsetting this is to the modern pedagogue, concerned as we are with having students understand a text, exercise, technique at the moment of contact. The child may have begun writing or sounding out portions of Homer or other literary texts and in preparing these for memorization and reading, the school child punctuated, glossed, erased, and corrected. The multiple physical encounter with the text is instructive: he and she are learning the physical routines of reading and writing.

The fable has neither the linguistic difficulty nor the fixity of the epic text. Its plasticity (and subliterate status) made it an ideal medium for the child's reading, copying, commenting, paraphrasing, composing, abridging, expanding, and reciting. Here and with the collections of proverbs (the gnomology) the curriculum responded more clearly to what were understood to be the needs of children. Those needs were in several senses understood as an imitative rehearsal of adult skills and tasks. Thus, ancient education helped to shape the child as that hybrid creature, playing in stylized routines and segregated venues at adult roles. All the while the child was being told that he or she was but playing—compared with the maturity of power and position that would come with the real adult world—but decidedly working with the intellect when compared either with the lazy scholar or to the slave bent on manual and menial duties.

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PART V

CHILDREN IN
THE EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN

CHAPTER 23

CHILDREN IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT: WHAT THE PAPYRI SAY

MARYLINE PARCA

INTRODUCTION

EVEN if the poets of the Hellenistic period did not “discover” childhood (Golden 1997: 179; Ambühl 2007), they were exceptionally skilled at conveying the gestures and moods of children: little Artemis, perched on Zeus’ knees, vainly reaches for her father’s beard (Callimachus, *Hymn* 3, 4, and 26–7), a toddler grows anxious as his mother gossips about his father (Theocritus, *Idyll* 15, 11–13), and a boy loses himself in the plaiting of a cage for his crickets (Theocritus, *Idyll* 1, 52–3). These vignettes, strikingly lifelike and endearingly universal, offer only glimpses of actual experiences and prove inadequate guides to the historian wishing to document the lives of children and their place in family and society. This essay will query instead the record preserved in the papyri written in Egypt when the descendants of Ptolemy son of Lagos ruled the country—from the first decades of the third century to Cleopatra’s death in 30 BCE—in the slender hope that out of a textual corpus comprised of tax records, petitions, contracts, wills, business correspondence and private letters, a portrait of children *as they were* might emerge. This enterprise is wrought with difficulties. One major hurdle is the relative scantiness of the Ptolemaic materials available compared to those of Roman date (on which see the chapter by Pudsey in this volume). Another lies in the ambiguity of the terminology associated with childhood (the ambiguity encompasses age, status, and gender), and a third is owed to the fact that the children glimpsed in the papyri essentially reflect the perspectives, concerns, and interests of adults. The first hurdle will occasionally be circumvented with evidence of Roman date, but only when behavior or mentalité can be safely assumed to have persisted over time.

WORDS FOR CHILDREN

Any discussion of the Greek terminology of childhood begins with Mark Golden's essay on the noun *pais* in the Athenian vocabulary, where it is a referent both for child and young person (boy and girl) and for a slave of any age, does not connote extreme youth (i.e., a *pais* is not a baby), and may describe any age up to adulthood (Golden 1985: 91–3). Other words include *paidion*, meaning “child” and “young slave,” *paidarion* meaning “small child” and “young slave,” and *paidiske* meaning “young girl” and “slave girl.” In contexts emotionally charged, such as occur in tragedy, *teknon* is regularly used (pp. 96–7). An examination of *teknon* and *pais* in the papyri has confirmed the affectionate overtones of *teknon* in nonliterary contexts and established the second main use of the noun (often in the plural) as the designation for “offspring of a parent” in the formulaic parts of Ptolemaic wills and in marriage contracts (Stanton 1988: 464–6). Since *pais*, *paidion*, and *paidarion* can be used to designate freeborn children and slaves, the context in which the words occur is often the best guide to the status of the individual mentioned. Thus, in the extensive third century BCE archive of Zenon, *pais* and *paidarion* are used more often for slaves than for free persons, and *paidiske*, usually taken to designate a slave, can occasionally refer to a freeborn individual (Stanton 1988: 468–76). None of the terms implies a specific age.

Greek letters preserved on papyrus are filled with words for children, some referred to by name, many identified only by kinship term (i.e., child, son, or daughter) or by a combination of kinship term and name. Assembling a corpus of 4,738 papyrus letters, dated to the third century CE and earlier, Eleanor Dickey (2004) showed that the highest incidence (1,586 instances) of words for children occurs in letters of the third century BCE (the next highest frequency [1,057] is found in the second century CE), that *pais* is virtually absent from the letters from the third century BCE onward except in the sense of “slave,” and that after the third century BCE *paidarion* completely eclipses *pais* as the term used in reference to a slave. She further observed a marked expansion over time in the use of *teknon* and *paidion* meaning “child” rather than “little child” (p. 121) and pointed out that, while the nouns “son” and “daughter” are used in the singular in third-person reference to a single male or female offspring, the plural forms *paidia* and *tekna* are employed, apparently interchangeably, when referring to multiple children, no matter their gender (pp. 128–9).

The lessons of the linguistic evidence are clear: while words for children are frequent in the papyri, they do not necessarily refer to individuals in the time of life we might call “childhood,” they are not solely employed to describe familial relationships, and when they do they generally convey the affective bond of an adult for a child rather than that of a child for an adult. Searching for children with dictionary in hand is an instructive start, but looking for them in their families is a better place for inquiry.

FAMILIES

The world experienced by the Greeks and Macedonians who immigrated to Egypt in the third century BCE, drawn by the economic possibilities opened up by the first Ptolemies, was not one and the same. The citizen population in the newly founded Greek cities of Alexandria (on the Nile delta) and Ptolemais (in the southern part of the country) was and remained solidly Graeco-Macedonian, whereas large numbers of newcomers—reserve troops allotted parcels of land (*kleroi*) by the crown and civilian entrepreneurs seeking opportunities—settled in the countryside (known as the *chora*) among the native Egyptian population. Given that the first waves of immigration had involved single men mostly, many Greeks took Egyptian women as wives and, by the second century BCE, through intermarriage and the social mobility which often went hand in hand with it, the population of the *chora* was, variously but unmistakably, mixed (Clarysse 1985; Bagnall 1988: 22–4; Thompson 2001).

Records of capitation charges the new Macedonian regime levied on the people of Egypt provide a view of this population. The collection of those taxes was based on a population count, by household and according to occupation: the Ptolemaic census can be inferred from the extant evidence of a few personal household declarations and the more ample, if fragmentary, tax registers drawn up on the basis of presumptive population lists (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, vol. 2: 10–35). The main capitation charge was the salt tax, paid in cash. It was levied on most adults, male and female, although particular groups (teachers, athletics coaches, actors, doctors, priestly personnel, and policemen among them) were exempted (pp. 123–86). Note how some of the fiscally privileged groups reflect the cultural agenda of the new regime: the Macedonian kings were committed to ensuring that the teaching and practice of Greek culture flourish in the new land through Greek education, the gymnasium, athletic games, and the performing arts (Thompson 1994: 75–8; 2007: 128–31).

The majority of these tax registers (published as *P.Count*) emanate from the Fayum (or Arsinoite nome), a marshy area reclaimed by the early Ptolemies and used by them as a prime area for the settlement of soldiers (cleruchs) who supported themselves and their families from allotted parcels of agricultural land. The Greek presence in the Fayum was therefore particularly high, civilian and military elements making up more than 30% of a population of roughly 85,000 (Thompson 2009: 401). Once discarded from government offices, the tax records were recycled into mummy cartonnage and buried in the local cemeteries. Cartonnage texts were recovered during early twentieth-century excavations of those burial grounds and in all *P.Count* include nearly fifty papyri, most of which date from the mid-third century BCE. Written in either Greek or Egyptian demotic, they preserve lists of adults, organized by village, occupation, and social group and by household, together with the

taxes paid on their persons, livestock, and trades. Although they inventory adults only, the records reveal distinct attitudes toward children in this culturally mixed rural society.¹

FEWER GIRLS

The database of 427 tax-paying Greek and Egyptian households derived from these registers documents differences in marriage patterns (in the third century BCE, about 8% of Greek males are married to Egyptian women, while none of the husbands with an Egyptian name is listed with a Greek-named wife) and the average size of immigrant and indigenous families. The larger households of the Greeks stand out (one comprises twenty-two adults, another fifteen, and two include eleven members, whereas the largest Egyptian household numbers eight adults), with the marked difference in the size of the households reflecting the respective economic status of the two segments of the population (Thompson 2002: 140–4; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2: 230–46; Thompson 2009: 402–3). More importantly for our subject, Greek households also stand out by a marked underrepresentation of daughters, a characteristic not shared by Egyptian families. Indeed, as is well-known, classical authors singled out the Egyptian practice of raising all the children born to them as strikingly different from the Greek attitude to the birth of daughters (cf. Diodorus Siculus 1.80.3, writing in the first century BCE, and Strabo 17.2.5 in the early empire). Such imbalance between the number of registered sons and daughters in the Greek households may therefore provide supporting evidence for the practice of exposure of newborn girls among the settler community (Thompson 2002: 152–3; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2: 308–12). And in a social group with a fairly high military component, the restriction that the *kleros* be transmitted to a son may have exacerbated the cultural predisposition to view daughters as a financial burden. However, a first-century BCE temple regulation from the Greek city of Ptolemais specifying the length of the purification period required of men (lines 3–8) and women (lines 10–4) before they can enter a sacred place following acts or events deemed defiling (such as intercourse, birth and death), suggests that the practice of exposure remained alive in the Greek community throughout the Ptolemaic period:²

Men who enter into the [sanctuary] must wait to be pure in accordance with the following: (for the pollution deriving) from one's own [or another's] illness, seven days; from death, [... x (days)]; from miscarriage, [... x (days)]; from (a woman) who has given birth and is nursing, [x (days)], and if she exposes (the child), fourteen. Men after (sex with) a woman, two days. Women, as in the case of men, (but?) from a miscarriage, forty.

¹ Ptolemaic wills, which routinely mention the wife or the children of the testator as heirs, do not specify the age of the children, many of whom were not adult (Clarysse et al. 1991: 34–5).

² The translation quoted here is adapted from Rowlandson 1988: 65, no. 40, itself informed by Bingen's 1993 reassessment of the mutilated text and its contents. Bingen's translation (1993: 224, 227, reprised in Legras 2010: 42–3) handles the abandonment of the newborn (ἐὰν ἐχθῇ in line 7, [ἐ]ὰν ἐχθῇ τὸ βρέφος in line 12) with language so tactful (“si elle s'est séparée de l'enfant”) that it obscures the reality. Pace Pomeroy 1986: 162; 1990: 136, published prior to Bingen's article. On infant exposure, see further Evans Grubbs in this volume.

A woman who has given birth and is nursing, forty, but if she exposes the child, [x]. From menstruation, seven. (After sex with) a man, two days, and [she shall bring?] myrtle.

(SB 1.3451 = SEG 42.1131)

GETTING READY FOR BABY

Exposure, whether motivated by economic, health, or cultural reasons, must have been an exceptional measure. Then as now, children were wanted so that the household (*oikos*) may endure and because they were to care for their parents in their old age. Formal complaints lodged with the authorities against grown children reveal that aging parents could sometimes be sorely disappointed:

To King Ptolemy, greeting from Ctesicles. I am being wronged by Dionysius and my daughter Nice. For though I have raised her, being my own daughter, and educated her and brought her up to womanhood, when I was stricken with physical infirmity and with failing eyesight, she would not furnish me with any of the necessities of life.

(*P.Entreux*. 26, 222 BCE)

To King Ptolemy, greeting from Pappos. I am wronged by Strouthos, my son. I sent him to school and gave him a good education. When I grew old and could not provide my own subsistence, I appeared [?] in the village of Arsinoe before Dioscourides, your deputy [?], who ordered him to furnish me with one artab of wheat and four drachmas per month, in which terms Strouthos himself concurred. But despite that he has given me nothing of what he has agreed to, and whenever he meets me he abuses me most shamefully.

(*P.Entreux*. 25, 221 BCE)

Fortunately, papyri do more than document paternal disappointment: private letters reveal that the birth of a child was a family event anxiously awaited (“Be sure to write to me about Dionysarion, how many months (pregnant) she is” [*P.Oxy.* 46.3312, second century CE]) and that family and friends wished to be of assistance to the pregnant woman (“At my request, do me the favor of bringing my daughter so that she may give birth” [*P.Oxf.* 19, after 208 CE]). A midwife was generally present during labor and delivery, assisted by other women (relatives, friends, or neighbors) who stood by and lent the pregnant woman moral and physical support. The use of a birth stool like the wooden one of Pharaonic date in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (no. 56.353; Hanson 1994: 166–8; Rowlandson 1998: 288, pl. 33a) or the one seen in the Egyptian terracotta figurine of Roman date (British Museum, GR 1992.8.11.1; Rowlandson 1998: 288, pl. 33b) on which a pregnant woman sits, knees apart, is documented in the Ptolemaic period as well. One painted limestone funerary stele from the Ibrahimieh necropolis in Alexandria, of the late fourth/early third century

BCE, shows a woman in childbirth. She leans back on a chair padded with fabrics: one attendant stands before her, holding her right arm, while another woman stands behind her and supports her under the left arm (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 04.17.1; see Venit 2002 for a discussion of early Hellenistic tombs).

The Greek doctor Herophilus, who made important discoveries in general anatomy and gynecology while conducting dissections at the Museum in Alexandria in the third century BCE, has been credited, more optimistically than is warranted by the primary evidence, as an advocate for “a sitting position for delivery that offered support for the parturient’s back” (Rowlandson 1998: 289). Herophilus did write a treatise on midwifery (von Staden 1989: 296–9), whose only extant passage is quoted by Soranus in his own *Gynecology* (4.1 [53]; text and translation in von Staden 1989: 367–8). The passage surveys the reasons for difficult childbirth (*dystocia*), some of which are internal, such as the presentation of the fetus, others external to the uterus, such as the parturient’s diet or some skeletal malformation of the loin and spine (*lordosis*). Herophilus was the first to isolate this condition among the causes of *dystocia* (Hanson 1994: 197), and this fact has prompted the clever but unproven suggestion that when the poet Callimachus, a fellow Alexandrian scholar, has the goddess Leto give birth to Apollo by sitting and supporting her shoulders against the trunk of a palm tree (*Hymn to Delos*, lines 206–11), the poet wittily “writes” Herophilus’ medical finding into Leto’s posture (Most 1981: 192–5). But Herophilus is not known to have advocated the sitting position (the presumed therapy for lumbar *lordosis*) assumed by Callimachus’ goddess, and Leto’s position is the “normal position of Greek women in childbirth” (von Staden 1989: 394–5). This is the way babies were born in the capital and elsewhere in Egypt.

The testimony of private correspondence makes it clear that men of the household could, if they so chose, help with advance preparations before a delivery, and several letters of Roman date show them involved in gathering items for use in birth (Hanson 1994: 159–60 with Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 167–8). In a letter written sometime in the first century CE, a man even calls on his father to care for a friend’s pregnant wife as she approaches full term in her husband’s absence: “please, father, go to her toward the end of Mecheir (February) or the middle of Phamenoth (March), so that you will be there before she comes to term. . . . Everything has been adequately prepared for her childbed” (*BGU* 2.665; transl. Lewis 1985: 80).

Children were born at home, perhaps in a room designated for women, if the custom of reserving separate quarters for the women of the household evidenced among Greek families of Roman Egypt (Hanson 1994: 169, n. 26) was a practice most families could materially afford. Relatives of the new mother breathed a sigh of relief at the news of a successful birth, as in this second century BCE letter in which a grandmother ventures a name for the newborn girl:

Your mother [name lost] to Ptollis, Nicander, Lysimachos, and Tryphaina, greetings. If you all are well, it would be as I wish. I pray to the gods to know that you all are healthy. We received the letter from you in which you (Tryphaina) announce that you have given birth. I kept praying to the gods every day on your behalf. Now that

you have escaped, I shall spend my days in the greatest joy. I sent you a flask full of olive oil and [...] pounds of dried figs. Please empty the flask and send it back to me safely because I need it here. Don't hesitate to name the little one Cleopatra, so that your little daughter...

(*P.Münch.* 3.57; trans. Rowlandson 1998: 291)

Of the nursing contracts preserved on papyrus only one is of Ptolemaic date (232 BCE). This unique document, written in Demotic, records an agreement between two Egyptians (Thissen 1984; Legras 2010: 50–3). The Egyptian text (*P.Cairo dem. Inv.* 30604) is accompanied by a short Greek subscription recording the contract as duly registered (*P.Tebt.* 2.279); together the two texts constitute our oldest wet-nursing contract (*C.Pap.Gr.* 1.1 = TM 3544).³ The dearth of Ptolemaic examples suggests that such agreements were routinely made verbally and that Greeks, too, entrusted their children to nurses is known from allusions in various contexts: *P.Heid.* 3.232 (155 or 144 BCE) is a letter in which Theon asks Paches to secure the services of the wet nurse Tetosiris by paying her a year's salary in advance.

In the Demotic contract, Sponnesis the nurse declares that she will “suckle and feed and care for and protect from all error and harm” the little Petesouchos in the house of his father Phanesis for a period of three years (lines 2–4). Her compensation will be paid monthly, in kind (wheat, oil, laundry) and in money (for her “subsistence” and clothes). The 250 drachma salary recorded in the Greek registration calls to mind the allowance of food and clothing the wife receives from her husband in some Egyptian “annuity contracts” (Johnson 1996: 180–1; Rowlandson 1998: 156–7). The substantial sum could be explained by the fact that Phanesis is a widower and that the nurse is expected to incur the expenses the wife herself would incur, were she alive (Legras 2010: 53).

Precious little is said about the nursing or about the “error and harm” the nurse promises to protect him against. It is possible that lacking milk and being pregnant or ceasing to care for the child for another reason, circumstances that would void the contract and make the nurse liable for damage (as spelled out in lines 7–8), are situations deemed harmful to the infant. From the lengthy nursing period stipulated in this text, it appears that suckling continued after the child began to eat solid food. Also, from the fact that wet-nursing contracts were often drawn up for a period ranging from eighteen months to two and a half years, it is likely that mothers who nursed their own children also breastfed them for a similar length of time (see also Parkin in this volume). The iconographic type of the divine mother Isis holding or nursing her son Harpocrates (e.g., Rowlandson 1988: 51, pl. 11, 129, pl. 16), widely documented in Egyptian art in various mediums, was also extremely popular among the mass-produced terracotta figurines

³ A complete bibliographical profile of the texts can be found on Trismegistos (TM), a portal of papyrological and epigraphical resources dealing with Egypt. Available at: <http://www.trismegistos.org/daht/detail.php?tm=3544>. For wet nurses in Pharaonic Egypt, see Spieser (2012), and for wet nurses in Roman Egypt, see Pudsey in this volume.

used in domestic worship in Hellenistic times, and the remarkable favor with which the archetypal image of motherhood met in the population suggests that many purchased them, either as thankful gifts for the goddess or as objects believed to confer protection and sympathetic benefit on mortal women (Dunand 2004: 14; see further Tran Tam Tinh 1973; Dunand 1979).

The papyri do not document the mother's and nurse's physical handling of young children—not a word about swaddling, cradling, rocking infants, bathing and weaning babies, calming the angry child, soothing the sick or frightened one, guiding the toddler's first steps, or socializing and supervising her at play. However, it would not be wrong to import the child-rearing practices Ann Hanson (2003) brilliantly revealed by “juxtaposing what the *Iliad* tells about the early life of Achilles and other young children of epic” to Galen's pediatric theory and practical advice into the world of Hellenistic Egypt. For just as “such a comparison not only highlights some repetitive themes in the conservative atmosphere of raising Greek children over the *longue durée*, but also reveals that the *Iliad* presupposes the young Achilles to have enjoyed a normative upbringing” (p. 188), such universality can be safely assumed for the Ptolemaic context.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES AND TOYS

Papyrus accounts, orders of payment, and letters document the celebration of the birthday (called *genethlia* or *genesia*) among Greeks living in Egypt (birthdays are rarely mentioned in Demotic texts), and several references to the first birthday in particular suggest that it was especially important, understandably given the high infant mortality (Perpillou-Thomas 1993: 4; see also Parkin in this volume). While private birthday celebrations became frequent in the Roman period and are therefore amply documented (Perpillou-Thomas 1993: 5–8; Rowlandson 1998: 296–7), the Ptolemaic attestations are few and generally not concerned with children but for one fortunate exception. In a letter dated to the mid-third century BCE, Demetrios reminds Zenon that the birthday (*genethlia*) of his “little” Demetrios, perhaps a son of the writer, falls on the seventeenth of the month Phamenoth and asks him to provide wine, a suckling pig, and flour (for bread and cakes) for the birthday feast (*P.Cair.Zen.* 3.59419 = *P.Cair.Zen.* 4, p. 289). As the list of goods requested makes clear, little Demetrios' birthday party is both a private occasion for entertaining relatives and friends and a social event meant to strengthen the unity of the group by promoting and maintaining shared customs. The supplies, writes Demetrios, are needed “in order that his [i.e. the child's] mother spend the day as is customary” (lines 8–9).

The feast on “the fortieth day of the little one” mentioned in a private letter of Roman date (*tetrakosta tou mikrou*, *P.Fay.* 113.14 [100 CE]) is likely to have been observed among Greeks in the Ptolemaic period, and we will recall that the *lex sacra* of Ptolemais discussed above prohibits women who have given birth from entering a sanctuary within a forty-day interval after delivery. That the same number of days was particularly critical

for the child as well is explained by Censorinus (third century CE): “For forty days after the delivery, most mothers are rather heavy and continue to discharge blood; the babies, particularly fragile through those days, do not smile and are not free from danger. This is the reason why, past that day, the custom is to hold a feast day, which occasion is called ‘the fortieth day.’ Now, before the fortieth day the new mother does not enter a shrine” (*De die natali* 11, 7). The fortieth-day feast may therefore have celebrated the child’s survival and marked his birth in social terms as well as his mother’s return to a state of ritual cleanliness and social acceptance (Montserrat 1996: 33–4).

Puberty rituals marking the child’s change of status based on physical maturation are not documented in papyri of Ptolemaic date, but their attestation in both classical Greece and Pharaonic Egypt and their occurrence in Roman Egypt suggest that their existence in the Hellenistic period cannot be ruled out. The possibility is suggested by dinner invitations of Roman date to two festivals little understood: the *mallocouria*, seemingly for adolescent boys; and the *therapeuteria*, perhaps only in honor of unmarried girls. Dominic Montserrat (1991: 45; 1996: 39–41) persuasively suggested that the former could have celebrated “the occasion of hair-cutting,” a ritual of transition either imported from Greece or adopted from the Egyptian lock of youth (or Horus-lock) worn up to puberty, and speculated that the latter could have been a temple ritual “perhaps performed at menarche or as a preliminary to marriage” (1991: 48).

Historians of childhood have long probed the archeological record as a vast repository of evidence for children’s physical experiences, be they feeding bottles, high chairs, rattles, tops, wheeled horses, miniature carriages, or dolls (Rowlandson 1998: 139–40, 236; Neils and Oakley 2003: 263–82). In discussions of toys in particular, children tend to be viewed as users of artifacts purchased or made by adults with a view to “suggest and enforce certain norms of behavior for children based upon their gender, age, socio-economic class and even socio-cultural ideals of beauty” (Wilkie 2000: 101). Toys as tools of cultural and gender identity constitute a vast and complex subject; however, the scarcity of materials of Ptolemaic date dissuades me from pursuing the topic here.⁴

Among the various toys recovered in funerary, domestic, and religious contexts in Egypt, dolls have received ample scholarly treatment (Elderkin 1930; Janssen 1996; Johnson 2003; Fluck 2004). Whether purely playthings, former playthings that later become offerings to the gods or gifts to the dead, amulets, or tools of magic, dolls may have had multiple meanings and functions reflecting the worlds of leisure and ritual. They may also have been objects that children themselves altered or made (Janssen 1996: 232; Fluck 2004: 400) from materials such as scraps of wool, wood, or papyrus. This possibility restores a measure of agency to antiquity’s children and establishes them not solely as passive users and consumers of objects chosen for them by adults (Wilkie 2000: 102; see also Langdon in this volume).

⁴ Mary Harlow’s chapter in this volume examines the material culture of Roman childhood.

GOING TO SCHOOL

If the Hellenistic period conjures up terracotta figurines of girls dressed for school and carrying books (Pomeroy 1990: 60, Harris 1989: 136–7), the opportunity to learn to read and write was undoubtedly not a reality for most children in Egypt, whether they lived in urban centers or in villages of the countryside.⁵ For both Egyptians and Greek settlers literacy was a means of asserting and improving one's social status (Maehler 1983), but it is unlikely that Greek and indigenous schools catered to children from a wide range of social backgrounds. In some cases, the first elements of reading and writing may have been taught at home, with a parent, a friend, or someone hired to teach, and in others they were acquired in a school setting, be it “a private house, the shaded porch of a temple, or the dusty ground under a tree” (Cribiore 1996: 6). Learning with a teacher involved fees, and most families would not have been able to afford them. The expense, however, was often considered worthwhile: the aged fathers we encountered earlier suggest that while educating their children was a sacrifice it was also an investment in the future, theirs included. The notional pupil, therefore, is generally considered to be socially privileged, whether he learns to write Demotic under the guidance of priests in a temple compound and prepares himself for a career of scribe and notary (Maehler 1983: 192–3; Morgan 1998: 274; Marganne 1999: 31, 32 = 2004: 4, 6; Legras 2010: 81–4) or whether he is introduced to Greek letters and culture via hired teachers and the cultural opportunities of the gymnasium (Legras 2010: 85–8).

The full course of ancient education comprised three levels, each supervised by a different teacher.⁶ The pupil began learning letters under the guidance of an instructor called *grammatodidaskalos* or *didaskalos*, and the curriculum focused on learning to read and write. The student next passed under the supervision of a *grammatikos*, charged with teaching language and literature. The last stage included the study of rhetoric and public speaking with a *sophistes* or a *rhetor*. Promotion to the different levels of schooling was based on ability, not age. Thus, in Herodas' skit “The Schoolmaster,” written in the early third century BCE, the pupil, old enough to gamble money away, has yet to master his letters (“He does not even know the letter Alpha, unless someone shouts it at him five times”; *Mimiambos*, 3.22–3). In Rome, pupils appear to have begun school at age seven, graduating to the grammarian's instruction at about twelve and to the study of rhetoric around fifteen (Harris 1989: 240). The vast corpus of school exercises assembled and scrutinized by Raffaella Cribiore (1996: 173–284; see also Morgan 1998: 275–322) illustrates the graduated course of the literary education dispensed in Greek and Roman

⁵ On women's education in the Hellenistic period, see, for example, Pomeroy 1990: 59–72; Morgan 1998: 48–9, and n. 149; Cribiore 2001: 74–101; on female literacy, see Bagnall and Cribiore 2006. See also Dillon's chapter in this volume, and more generally Bloomer's chapter in this volume.

⁶ This brief description is adapted from Cribiore 1996: 13, herself indebted to the pioneering works of Marrou 1975 and Bonner 1977.

Egypt (Morgan 1998). The school materials cannot, however, be correlated with precisely delineated age groups.

The writing tablets, the papyrus notebooks, and the reused potsherds provide windows on the training of the hands, eyes, and minds of teachers and students. A few texts from the Zenon archive—an extensive third-century BCE collection of papers kept by Zenon, an immigrant from Caunos in Asia Minor and a prominent man in the expanding village of Philadelphiea in the Fayum—allow glimpses of the learners and of their caretakers and lend understanding to the cultural importance the Greeks recently settled in Egypt attached to educating their young (Clarysse and Vandorpe 1995: 58–62; Legras 1999: 23–30; Thompson 2007: 131–5). Various letters document Zenon's personal involvement in the schooling, physical training, and material well-being of male youths (and their mothers), in all likelihood the orphan sons of soldiers (Clarysse and Vandorpe 1995: 62) whose care and education the state entrusted to locally prominent individuals. In a letter dated to 257 BCE, Hierocles writes to Zenon: “You wrote to me about Pyrrhos to train him, if we know for sure that he will win but, if not, to avoid that he turn away from his study of letters and incur useless expenses. He has not at all turned away from his study of letters, but he applies himself to it, and to the other subjects as well (*mathemata*). As far as the certainty of success is concerned, the gods would know best, but Ptolemaios [the trainer] says that he [Pyrrhos] will by far outdo the current competition” (*PLond.* 7.1941, lines 2–6). A promising athlete sent to Alexandria for training, Pyrrhos is expected not to fall behind in his literary studies. Another protégé of Zenon is mentioned in *PSI* 4.364 (251/250 BCE), in which Zenodoros proudly reports that his brother Dionysios won the athletic contest (*agon*) held at the Ptolemaia, acknowledges receipt of a cloak shipped by Zenon, and requests another (of thicker and softer wool this time) because Dionysios needs one for the upcoming Arsinoeia festival. And, in *PLond.* 7.2017 (242 BCE), Heracleotes, an aspiring musician-vocalist, details to Zenon his material needs for the next two years as he readies himself for various public performances. Training for athletic and musical contests sponsored by the state took place in the gymnasium,⁷ an institution in which Greek education (literary, musical, and athletic) and dynastic cult asserted, through their joint practice and celebration, the distinct cultural identity of the Greek population in the new society (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2: 125–38; Thompson 2007: 135–7).

With the last text, dated to the second century BCE, we move away from the privileged Greek milieu of Zenon's entourage to catch a tantalizing glimpse of the culturally mixed reality of Ptolemaic society. The congratulations a woman (whether a mother, sister, or wife is not known) addresses to a young man who is learning Demotic Egyptian reveals that the benefits of bilingualism were not lost on the newcomers: “Discovering that you are learning Egyptian letters, I was delighted for you and for myself, because now when you come to the city you will teach the slave boys in the establishment of Phalou . . . the

⁷ Remijsen 2009 examined the Ptolemaic focus on sports as a means of asserting the Greek identity of Egypt's new rulers.

enema doctor, and you will have a means of support for your old age” (*UPZ* 1.148, trans. Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 113). The slaves must be Greek speaking; they learn Egyptian to master a specifically Egyptian medical skill (Maehler 1983: 201–2; Legras 1999: 22–3).

HARD LIVES

Most children did not attend school, and many learned practical skills “by doing,” whether at home, in the fields, or in workshops. The least lucky ones were children sold into slavery abroad and imported into Egypt where they served Greek households. Several papyri from the Zenon archive show Zenon conducting business on behalf of Ptolemy II’s finance minister Apollonios, including the purchase of young slaves in Palestine. *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59003 (259 BCE) records the sale of the slave girl Sphragis, “about seven years of age,” to Zenon, and two years later, Toubias, an important Palestinian functionary, announces a gift of four male slaves (aged seven to twelve) to Apollonios in Alexandria (*P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59076). Nothing is known of the fate of these children once they reached Egypt. The distress felt from being separated from their parents and their physical and cultural disorientation once in the Egyptian capital can only be surmised.

For Greek children, too, socialization into a life of work and service could be brutal, as Simale informs Zenon in a letter:

Simale, the mother of Herophantos, to Zenon, greeting. Since I heard that my boy (*paidion*) had been mistreated and rather badly, I came to you and after arriving I wanted to petition you about these matters. But when Olympichos prevented me from seeing you, somehow I was brought in the presence of my child and I found him lying down in a hardly laughable state and seeing him was enough for me to grieve. But when Olympichos arrived he said that by beating him rotten he would make him—or that he had already made him—someone who was already nearly decent. Thus I beg and beseech you to concern yourself with these matters and to report to Apollonios in which way my child has been continuously maltreated by Olympichos as if he were responsible for his illness. For I, in addition to the fact that I have received exactly nothing for a year already except for the mina and 3 artabs of wheat since the month Dystros when Herophantos has come to you—the boy himself tells me of the goodwill of Apollonios and yourself that you keep on showing to him. I ask you, therefore, and beg you that, if Apollonios has ordered to pay him anything, his wages be paid to me. Rest assured that as soon as the god sets him free I shall bring him back to you so that I may see you with regard to the rest. Learn the rest from the person who brings you this letter, for he is not a stranger to us. Farewell.

(*P.Col.* 3.6, March 257 BCE, trans. Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 100)

The mother complains to Zenon that her son Herophantos, attached to the retinue of the finance minister Apollonios (a favor she and her son warmly acknowledge), was badly

treated by Olympichos. The argument invoked by the brutal overseer, that beating will make (*poiesein*) the child into someone “nearly decent,” reminds us that children were “liable in law and custom to physical violence, often in a disciplinary context” and that “corporal punishment was also a mark of identification, the immediate physical consequence of social inferiority, for slaves and children alike” (Golden 1985: 101–2). And it is also possible that “the economic value of children as labor force may have influenced the way people behaved towards them. It may have been usual to accustom the child to the world of work and labor by the use of physical persuasion” (Laes 2005: 87). Simale’s complaint that she did not receive the promised wages suggests that the boy was put to work for a salary and that she has a claim on the money he receives because he is a minor. She has taken Herophantos home and will return him to his employer when he is restored to health.

CHILDREN AND DEATH

Death came to children at any time (Marganne 1999: 32–5 = 2004: 6–9; see also Parkin in this volume). Many mothers and children did not survive childbirth (cf. *P.Fouad* 75, 64 CE). Miscarriages were sometimes caused by physical violence sustained by expectant mothers, and in the reports filed with the authorities the potentially grave effects of the battery onto the victim’s condition were naturally emphasized (Parca 2002: 292–3). The beating of a pregnant woman is reported in a letter written by Sabbataios, the victim’s husband: “... in consequence of the blows and the fall she is suffering severely and, since she has had to take to her bed, the child which she is carrying is in danger of being miscarried and of passing away. I present to you this petition in order that, when you have come to the spot and observed (?) her condition, Johanna may be secured until the outcome is apparent and that it may not happen that Johanna in case of any untoward event goes unpunished....” (*P.Tebt.* 3.800 = *C.Pap.Jud.* 1.133 of 153 or 142 BCE).

Sabbataios’ request that the assailant (perhaps Jewish, like Sabbatios and his wife?) be imprisoned until the outcome of the attack is known suggests that when he mentions the risk of miscarriage he anticipates the danger to his wife’s life. In a petition of 47 CE, the petitioner similarly associates miscarriage with the threat of death: “he also mercilessly rained on my wife Tanouris many blows on whatever part of her body he could reach, even though she was pregnant, with the result that she miscarried and was untimely delivered of a dead fetus and she herself is bedridden and in danger of her life” (*P.Mich.* 5.228; trans. Lewis 1985: 79). Bodily harm inflicted on a freeborn person was a crime of *hybris* in Ptolemaic and Roman penal law, and serious threat to the health of the victim constituted an aggravating circumstance that worsened the criminal’s penalty (Taubenschlag 1955: 435–42): if the pregnant victim died, the assault against her would be treated as murder. In none of the papyri concerned with battered pregnant women is either punishment or compensation for the unborn child’s death sought (Adam 1983: 16–9).

Given the extreme reticence surrounding the representation of children's death in the art and literature of ancient Egypt, archeology provides the bulk of our information on child mortality, with the caveat that conclusions based on the evidence of a few necropolises cannot be generalized for all regions or all periods (Dunand 2004: 15–6). Drawing on fieldwork carried out on three cemeteries (Douch, Aïn el-Labahka, and El Deir) of Ptolemaic and Roman date in the oasis of Kharga in the western desert, Françoise Dunand (pp. 21–8) examined the material evidence for infant and child mortality in a rural region of Egypt and offered a preliminary synthesis worth recalling here. The necropolis of Douch yielded several tombs with groups of very young children, one (Tomb 19) containing the remains, barely mummified, of about ten individuals ranging in age from newborn to twenty-four months, deposited directly in the ground, in shallow depressions cut in the floor of the funerary chamber, another (Tomb 73) holding about thirty individuals (fetuses, newborn, very young children), poorly preserved and probably not mummified. The communal resting place of children of widely disparate ages and the seemingly hasty and rather summary preparation of their bodies suggest that they may have died in an epidemic, for the regular practice at Douch was for children, one year old and older, to be carefully mummified and buried with their parents. Such was also the custom both in the Aïn el-Labahka necropolis where, incidentally, no remains of newborns were recovered, and in the El Deir burials (Tomb N11 held the remains of eight adults and five children ranging from a few months to four years old, and eleven of the seventeen individuals buried in Tomb N18 were children). The first birthday generally seems to have been a critical milestone; past that age the deceased were embalmed and their bodies often adorned with gold leaves, bronze earrings, pearl necklaces, and bracelets made of glass beads. The care brought to preparing the young deceased for their “second life” bears witness to the regard and love society bore them (Dunand 2004: 29; Dasen and Späth 2010: 4).

BEFORE LIFE AND BEYOND DEATH

Unborn children were the objects of legal dispositions inasmuch as they were to become part of their father's household (*oikos*). In a legislative act on divorce from the Greek polis of Ptolemais, the text of which is preserved in a papyrus dated to the early imperial period, we learn of the husband's obligation to provide an allowance to his wife, should she be pregnant at the time of the divorce (*apopompe*, literally “sending away”), and to his child, after birth (*P.Fay.* 22, lines 20–9; Yiftach-Firanko 2003: 75–6, 92–3).

The act of divorce was informal in Ptolemaic Egypt: all it took was the interruption of the joint life by one of the spouses, either “going away” or “sending away.” The Greek marriage document, which included clauses describing the obligations of the spouses toward each other as well as the consequences of their contravention, in effect also provided the contract with a divorce clause (Yiftach-Firanko 2003: 197–219). Provisions

regulating the recovery of the dowry in case of divorce were regularly included, and, in marriage documents from Oxyrhynchus in the Roman period, there was the added consideration of the welfare of joint children once the marriage was dissolved. Several documents (Adam 1983: 9–16) reveal that if a marriage should end in a divorce with the wife pregnant at that time, the husband must provide an allowance for her delivery and see to the support of mother and child after the birth. “Such provision goes back, in all probability, to the Ptolemaic period” (Yiftach-Firanko 2003: 211). Particularly noteworthy in the Oxyrhynchite contracts is the further stipulation of the husband’s obligation in divorces (*appalage*, “going away”) initiated by the wife (*P.Oxy.* 3.496, dated 127 CE, and *P.Oxy.* 10.1273, dated 260 CE).

Marriages were not ended by divorce alone, and the premature death of a husband naturally greatly affected his wife and their children. The pregnant widow was entitled, if she so wished, to live in the house of her deceased husband until the time of her delivery (Adam 1983: 10). The material support extended to her simultaneously recognized her continued (albeit irremediably altered) tie with her husband’s family and claimed the child she carried as belonging to the paternal *oikos*. However, pregnant widows and their in-laws may have preferred to sever such ties. In a document executed in 8 BCE between Dionysiarion, recently widowed and pregnant, and Hermione, mother of Dionysarion’s deceased husband, Dionysarion acknowledges that she has recovered her dowry from Hermione and renounces any future litigation regarding the dowry, the husband’s estate or any other matter. In addition, “since Dionysarion is also pregnant, she shall not bring action about the expenses of the child’s birth . . . and she is allowed to expose her infant (*to brephos ektithenai*) and to be joined to another man in marriage” (*BGU* 4.1104, lines 22–5; Evans Grubbs 2002: 267–8; see also Evans Grubbs in this volume). In effect, Dionysarion’s forfeiture of childbirth expenses achieves her complete financial severance from her deceased husband’s family. She thereby obtains the right to abandon the infant (if she chooses) and the right to remarry, a pairing suggesting that her remarriageability would be impaired by raising the child of her deceased husband (Rowlandson 1998: 171). Can Hermione’s relinquishing any interest in the fate of her unborn grandson be read as an act of solidarity toward her daughter-in-law? Or is it motivated by the desire to free herself from the financial burden of raising the young orphan? Hermione’s guardian is her brother’s son, suggesting that she herself is a widow and that the son she lost was perhaps her only son.

Marriage contracts also included, inserted after the divorce clause, provisions for the conveying of the property of the predeceased spouse to the surviving partner and their joint children (Yiftach-Firanko 2003: 221–9), as in this contract of the second century BCE: “if either of them [the spouses] should suffer mortal fate and die, let the property left behind belong to the surviving spouse and to the children whom they will have from one another” (*P.Gen.* 1.21 = *P.Münch.* 3.62, lines 15–6). That such clause appears in marriage agreements drawn at an early stage of a couple’s shared life, sometimes before children had been born, affords another view on the central importance of children in Ptolemaic family and society, even when conjured in the theoretical context of law.

CONCLUSION

Despite the elusiveness of Ptolemaic children in the papyrological record, they have, perhaps, not succeeded in hiding altogether. We see them at a multiple remove—a mother's anguished letter, the school tablet of a teacher, the remains of a common grave—variously transformed by the contexts in which they make their brief appearances, their ages unrecorded, their wit and words elided, yet never completely erased. Indeed, even if most of the contexts in which children appear are more revealing of the values, concerns, and expectations of adults than they are of children's own experiences and motivations, the papyri show that adults readily recognized and valued children as social beings and cultural agents. Just as children have been shown to be key actors in the transmission of social memory in Roman culture by their sharing in the social identities created within the family (Dasen and Späth 2010), the behaviors, traditions, and memories of specific social groups were carried on through children in Ptolemaic Egypt, as seen already, for example, in the underrepresentation of girls in Greek settlers' households, large socials celebrating a child's birthday, or the importance accorded Greek education, athletic games, and musical training. At the same time, papyri alert us to the plurality of childhoods: all children have a childhood, and each lives this period of life in ways prescribed by the variables of gender, legal status, economic class, ethnicity, and the "domestic politics" of the family unit (James and James 2005: 4–5). Little Sphragis from Palestine and Simale's sick indentured son, known to us only through an irreparably fragmented and hence all the more valuable corpus of papyri, offer rare glimpses of the diversity of experiences in Ptolemaic children's lives.

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CHAPTER 24

CHILDREN IN ROMAN EGYPT

APRIL PUDSEY

INTRODUCTION

ACROSS the study of ancient childhood, two premises are widely acknowledged.¹ The first of these is that childhood is at least in part defined by adults. While it is true that recent work (including chapters in this volume) presents a range of Greco-Roman artifacts and texts that illuminates children's experiences through their own eyes, this type of material is far from abundant. It follows, then, that childhood is necessarily explored through adult relationships with children. Second, the experience and the conceptions of childhood varied from one context to another, even within the same society.

Philippe Ariès' (1960) famous claim that childhood did not exist as a distinct stage of the life course before the modern world, not surprisingly, has been widely refuted and debunked. But one important consequence of Ariès' pioneering work in this field of study has been to highlight just how great a degree of variety there was in the experience of childhood in the past. It is not so much the case that societies in the past had no concept of childhood but rather that they differed in their conceptions of what it meant (Archard 1993: 21–8). Problems both with ancient evidence and in modern historical perspectives on the lives of children have hindered our attempts to paint a clearer picture of ancient childhood (Heywood 2001; Cohen 2007). In terms of the former, there has been comparatively little documentation of children's lives and experiences in the past, and the bulk of the material we do have comprises literary or visual material produced by adults. Additionally, historical perspectives on childhood, such as those of

¹ This research was largely undertaken while I was a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Liverpool, and I thank both the Leverhulme Trust and the University of Liverpool for their generous support. I would also like to thank Judith Evans Grubbs and Tim Parkin for their comments and advice on earlier drafts of this work.

Ariès and, equally, of his critics have often focused exclusively on the “evolution” or “discontinuity” in the experience of childhood as a phase of life.

These two problems are not insurmountable. From Roman Egypt, at least, there survives a wealth of documentary papyri that present information relating to the experiences and everyday lives of children both within their families and in their wider communities. Children’s experiences of everyday life in Egypt would have been shaped to some extent by particular socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural determining factors, so we may question the extent to which the evidence for children in Egypt can be considered broadly representative of the wider Roman world. The view that Egypt was typical of populations in the premodern Mediterranean and, by extension, the Roman Empire is one that has been put forward by Roger Bagnall, among others, largely on the basis of perceptions of distinctly “Mediterranean” patterns of marriage and family (most notably in Bagnall and Frier 2006: 173). Such blanket classification, however, may have been overstated: there is evidence to suggest some degree of deviation from these patterns in first marriage and remarriage in Egypt (see Pudsey 2011, 2012) and patterns in close-kin marriage or adoption of young men into families (Huebner 2007; Clarysse and Thompson 2006; see also Huebner’s chapter in this volume). Particular aspects of adult and infant mortality also arise from Egypt’s specific disease environments (Scheidel 2001: 1–117) that would have impacted on children’s lives in specific ways, as families responded to particular aspects of the pressures of age-specific mortality, within the culturally diverse social milieu of Egypt. But there were also overwhelming commonalities across social groups in the Roman world: the concerns of the urban elites for the transmission of land and property through their families; the presence of slaves in potentially large numbers in urban and rural contexts; the economic rationality of poor families whose children contributed to household economies; and the ever-present threat of death through disease, warfare, or hunger that was common to all social groups. Though children in Egypt are presented here within a specific regional context, it is likely that their experiences of everyday life in many regards would have differed little from those of children in similar social groups across the empire, just as concerns for the well-being and future of children would have been shared by parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles empire-wide.

Household census documents, legal petitions, marriage and divorce contracts, wills, and private letters all reveal something of the relationships between adults and the children within their families and adult attitudes toward these relationships. What is clear from the documents relating to children and childhood in the Greco-Roman world is that a society’s perception of the nature, purpose, and advantage of childhood within that society is largely dependent on immediate context (Dixon 2001a: 9–16); children can be seen as vulnerable or protected in a variety of contexts. For instance, children can be vulnerable to physical, sexual, or other abuse from family members, tutors, or guardians, yet, on the other hand, legal frameworks existed to protect children’s status within the family and any rights to inherited property they might have.

Similarly, children could be viewed from an adult perspective as immature, playful, and unintelligent, but in some political contexts responsible enough to become

enfranchised. Which way the balance tipped was largely a matter of the nature of the relationships between adults and children within domestic and legal contexts, in addition to the society's legal and social norms. Relationships between children and their parents, stepparents, and their widowed or divorced mothers (widowhood and divorce were common occurrences in Roman Egypt) are an important feature of the role and authority of the child within the family. Relationships between children and their tutors, both in legal terms and in actuality, are key to understanding the economic significance of children. Education, apprenticeships, and the selling (or, rather, temporary pledging as part of loan agreements) of children all occurred in the Greco-Roman world and are indicative of the value placed on children in those societies.

In this chapter I trace some of the more tangible aspects of the relationships between adults and children that can be gleaned from documentary sources, and I consider the range of material that provides some insight into the emotional relationships between parents and their children. There are three perspectives to consider, each of which is represented by other chapters in this volume and which the social sciences have presented as key approaches to understanding childhood as a stage of life (James and Proust 1997a: 13–5; Heywood 2001). First, childhood must be understood both as a biological stage of life and as a social construction. Some degree of physical immaturity in children is a biological fact common to all humans, across time and place, but it is the social and cultural environment that gives these biological facts consequence and that is created differently by different groups of people in their responses to these overlapping factors and influences. Second, childhood is one factor in the study of societies, and, as Suzanne Dixon (2001a: 1–2) pointed out, must be considered in relation to the other forms of social differentiation: status, gender, ethnicity. Under what circumstances were children deemed vulnerable and in need of protection? And under what circumstances were they expected to have held adult responsibilities, privileges, and concerns? Third, children were active participants in determining their own lives and the lives of others around them and were not merely followers of adults; the relationships between adults and children were characterized by a very real reciprocity, and adults were dependent on their children for affection, care, and their future as much as children depended on their parents for these same things. Can we trace the emotional relationships between adults and children?

THE DEMOGRAPHY OF CHILDHOOD

Children, from the moment they are born, and indeed from the moment they are conceived, are dependent on their physical, biological, and demographic circumstances; survival of birth and infancy in the ancient Mediterranean was by no means guaranteed, given the limitations governing maternal care and the vigor of various disease environments (as outlined in Scheidel 2001: esp. 1–117). To a certain degree the survival of very young children was also dependent on the social and cultural norms governing their

care; the successful and healthy feeding and weaning of babies and infants was contingent upon the availability of suitable milk and food and the knowledge and desire to feed and wean babies and infants in particular ways. As discussed elsewhere in this volume (see the chapter by Parkin in this volume), no aspect of a child's life in the ancient world was untouched by the impact of harsh demographic conditions where the death of children, particularly infants, was an ever-present threat, though some demographic studies of the ancient world have tended to overestimate infant mortality in relation to adult mortality, mortality, and an awareness of its looming threat were undoubtedly very high (Woods 1993, 2007). It is against the backdrop of adult responses to this threat that we must seek to understand most aspects of children's lives in the ancient world.

Adult responses to high mortality are nowhere more evident than in the census material from Roman Egypt; it is here that we can trace the relationship between *anticipated* mortality and fertility. Census data for the first three centuries CE cataloged and analyzed by Bagnall and Frier in their seminal 1994 work, *The Demography of Roman Egypt*,² present the records of a census of Roman Egypt held every fourteen years, conducted on a house-by-house basis, which recorded both urban and rural household members, their age, sex and occupation, and relationships to one another. It is through a study of these census data that we can trace the responses of adults to high mortality. There are various problems with interpretation of macrolevel demographic dynamics from these data (Hopkins 1980: 212–20; Parkin 1995; Scheidel 2001; Sallares 2002), but they remain extremely useful in outlining patterns of residence at the household level. We have information pertaining to the numbers, ages, status, and relationships of children both in relation to other resident children and to adults. Children are listed alongside their families and other, nonkin, residents in their household, and often details of their social and legal status are revealed—the names of their guardians, or their status as officially fatherless (on which see Malouta 2007, 2009). The majority of the census returns originate from the Fayum region of Lower Egypt and from the Oxyrhynchite nome; together they account for three-quarters of all the returns (Bagnall and Frier 2006: 6). In addition to these there are a number of records from Ptolemais in Upper Egypt (the focus of Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford 1997); they come from across the socioeconomic spectrum and exhibit little change over time. The patterns observed in the census material can therefore be seen as broadly typical of households in the Fayum region, supplemented by a smaller sample representing similar trends in Ptolemais.

We might expect that if parents anticipated, from experience, that not all of their children would survive birth or their first few years of life, they would decide to have greater numbers of children to increase the likelihood of at least some of them surviving to adulthood. In rural households in particular, and where economic circumstances were fragile, children would have been considered an economic asset to households (see Hin 2011). This is precisely what the census data demonstrate. We observe relatively large

² Updated with further documents in a later edition (Bagnall and Frier 2006) and supplemented with an additional volume (Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford 1997).

numbers of children in most households and significant age gaps between some siblings. This is indicative of a pattern of parents responding to high infant mortality by maximizing the number of children they have to counter the impact of high mortality; of course the large gaps between the ages of children were most likely the result of other children who had died.

If children survived their birth, they may still have been at risk of abandonment through the consequences (intended or unintended) of the practice of infant exposure. As is argued elsewhere in this volume (see the chapter by Evans Grubbs), the practice of infant exposure was ubiquitous in the ancient world, and it is in Roman Egypt that this is best evidenced. Infant exposure has often been discussed with reference to Egypt on the basis of copronyms (dung-names), reflecting the possibility that children were picked up from the dung heap and raised by strangers, and there are references in various texts to the practice of killing unwanted infants. Many motivations lay behind the practice of infant exposure, the consequences of which were not always increased infant mortality but rather a recirculation of children.³

What is clear is that infants were exposed for a variety of reasons, and we can observe in the census records what appear to be the likely consequences of the practice in the recorded slave population (see Evans Grubbs in this volume). Three trends emerge from the census data on slaves: first, the sex ratio tends to favor female slaves, particularly in the villages (Bagnall and Frier 2006: 94, 158–9); second, the majority of slaves lived in the household with their own familial unit (an argument could be made here for what Scheidel 1997 suggested was a pattern of “breeding” of slaves); and third, they mostly appear in households where there are children. These trends suggest that the unique value of female slaves for a household was twofold: their wet-nursing capabilities; and their capacity to produce more slaves. Exposed infants of both sexes might well have been collected with the intention of raising them as slaves (see, e.g., Bagnall and Frier 2006: 159 for discussion of cases of very young female slaves without mothers). The preponderance of female slaves in village households might indicate that, while male slaves may have been manumitted, female slaves were not, and part of the reason for this may lie with their potential both for reproduction and for wet nursing. Infant exposure and the employment of wet nurses in Roman Egypt were inextricably linked, both to one another and to demographic and socioeconomic circumstances; they need not necessarily be taken as an illustration of a lack of parental affection for children or a lack of interest in their care.

As Keith Bradley (1980, 1986) noted, Roman medical writers, and the population of Roman Egypt, were well acquainted with the benefits of breastfeeding, and recent archaeological research has contributed to our understanding of both breastfeeding and weaning patterns in the ancient world (see Parkin in this volume). Infant skeletal remains from the Dakhleh Oasis in Egypt have been the subject of stable nitrogen isotope analysis (a study

³ Engels 1980; Eyben 1980–1981; Oldenziel 1987; Boswell 1988; Harris 1994; Scheidel 1997; Harris 1999; Evans Grubbs 2011.

of the relative proportions of animal–human protein in the bone marrow), which has demonstrated that supplementary foods were introduced at around six months of age and that weaning was completed by three years of age. Even more recent archeological work on similar samples from early Neolithic cemeteries in central and southeast Turkey has enabled ancient historians to explore the relationship between the duration of exclusive breastfeeding and infant mortality; this has shown that mortality rates among the infants varied as a function of the duration of exclusive breastfeeding—the longer the period of exclusive breastfeeding, the greater the risk of infant death.⁴ The analysis and comparison of archeological material from these ancient sites, where nutritional information and agricultural practices are understood, demonstrate clearly that when communities were unaware of the optimal exclusive breastfeeding and weaning periods the health, and indeed survival, of infants were at risk.

Very young children's risk of death, then, depended on a number of social and cultural factors such as parental decisions on whether or not to raise them, the availability of nutritional knowledge, and perhaps the services of a wet nurse. The use of slaves for wet nursing—and in many cases the subsequent development of long-lasting affection between children and their nurses as those children grew older—was a feature of life for many children in Egypt, particularly those who had been born into or were acquired for slavery. Wet nursing contracts are abundant among the papyri; contracts were drawn up when slave women were hired out as wet nurses by their owners or when free women working as wet nurses contracted themselves out for a period of time. In the large village of Tebtunis, the record office kept a register of contracts issued for the nursing of slave infants (*P.Mich.* II 121, 42 CE). Of the forty contracts from Egypt collected and analyzed by Masciadri and Montevecchi, the larger proportion of infants for whom wet nurses were contracted were slaves (twenty-three nurslings are described as slaves), for instance in the case noted by the contract in *BGU* I 297 (50 CE), in which thirty-year-old Tasoukhis, in the village of Soknopaiou Nesos, is contracted to nurse a slave child in return for payment and subsistence.⁵ Six of these twenty-three slave nurslings are named as slave children born into a slave house,⁶ and in twelve of these cases the infants were designated as exposed infants, collected and to be raised as slaves.⁷

A smaller number of documents suggest that wet nurses may also have been hired to nurse some free children.⁸ The widespread presence of wet nurses is indicative of a

⁴ Pearson et al. 2010. See also Herry et al. 1998; Dupras et al. 2001; Prowse et al. 2004; Fuller et al. 2006; Bourbou and Garvie-Lok 2009.

⁵ Similar contracts are *PSI* X 1131 (42 CE); *P.Meyer* I 11 (112–4 CE); *P.Bour.* 14 (126 CE); and *BGU* III 859 (161–3 CE). These are collected in Masciadri and Montevecchi 1984 = *C.P.Gr.* 1.

⁶ *BGU* IV 1111 (15 BCE); *BGU* IV 1153 (14 BCE); *C.P.Gr.* I 8 (7–6 BCE); *BGU* IV 1108 (5 BCE); *BGU* IV 1112 (4 BCE); *C.P.Gr.* I 13 (30 BCE–14 CE). Collected in Masciadri and Montevecchi 1984 = *C.P.Gr.* 1.

⁷ *BGU* IV 1058, 1106, 1107 (13 BCE); *P.Amst.* I 41 coll II, III (10 BCE); *BGU* IV 1110 (5 BCE); *SB* V 7619 (50/49 BCE); *P.Rein.* II 104 (25–26 CE); *P.Oxy.* I 37 (49 CE); *BGU* I 297 (591 CE); *P.Oxy.* II 377 (68 CE); *P.Merton* III 118 (82 CE); *PSI* III 203 (87 CE); *P.Athen.* 20 (110 CE). Collected in Masciadri and Montevecchi 1984 = *C.P.Gr.* 1. See also Evans Grubbs in this volume.

⁸ Designated as free children in the documents: *P.Tebt.* II 279 (231 BCE); *BGU* IV 1112 (4 BCE); *P.Oxy.* II 321 (37 CE); *P.Cair. Preis.* 31c and a (140 CE); *PSI* IX 1065 (157 CE); *P.Oxy.* I 91 (187 CE). Collected in Masciadri and Montevecchi 1984 = *C.P.Gr.* 1.

response to the difficulties in ensuring free infants survived some of the risks inherent in feeding and weaning practices; it is also suggestive of an acceptance on some level of the practice of picking up of exposed infants and either raising or selling them on as slaves.

The prevalence of wet nursing in the past, and Ariès' contention that this demonstrates that parents held an attitude of indifference to the physical needs of their children, has led many historians to argue for a historical parental lack of interest in their young children or at least a deliberate attempt to limit emotional investment in young children in times of high infant mortality; the consequences of the latter could include neglect, abandonment, and, in extreme cases, infanticide (Stone 1977: 65). Such arguments make the assumption that maternal feeding was always available and was accepted as the best means of feeding children from both biological and social perspectives. But if a mother stopped producing milk and there were no alternatives, then wet nurses were the next best thing to maternal feeding; in fact, across the Roman Empire there is evidence to suggest that wet nurses in elite households were also regarded as symbols of status, and there was an abundance of slave women and poor free women to work as wet nurses (Bradley 1980: 322). In some documents from Roman Egypt we see the importance of the wet nurse within the families; one of the aforementioned examples shows that the wet nurse was given the privilege of naming the child (*SB XXII* 235, 154 CE). A slightly different attitude is discernable in a private letter from one woman to her son-in-law, in which she disapproves of her daughter's nursing a new infant and advises that her son-in-law hires a nurse; this may be indicative of a preference among wealthier women to use nurses (*P.Lond.* III 951, second half of the third century CE = Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 265). The economic value of servile wet nurses can be seen in the fact that they were frequently subject to strict sexual regulations to ensure their duties were not inhibited (Bradley 1980). Widespread use of wet nurses in Roman Egypt was a culturally accepted means of feeding infants and can be seen as both a cultural preference and a response to demographic pressures.

CHILDREN WITHIN FAMILIES AND THE HOUSEHOLD

At the household level in Roman Egypt, archeological studies have revealed some interesting aspects of the housing in which families lived, particularly in the well-known village of Karanis (Hobson 1985; Rowlandson 1998: 133–9; Nevett 2011). Excavations at Karanis were initially carried out by Eleanor Husselman (1979) and illustrated the nature of village housing: the practice of house sharing is demonstrated by the repeated occurrence of the courtyard shared between two houses.⁹ These excavations reveal that

⁹ Husselman 1979. See also Boak and Peterson 1931; Alston 1997: esp. 26–32.

houses, though typically relatively small (30 square meters), were multistoried and compact; there were usually two ground floor rooms with additional rooms in a second story, a basement, and a courtyard. Some aspects of the family's arrangement of the living space in the Karanis houses are reflected in documents that were found there (Rowlandson 1988: 133–9). It is clear from the Taesion/Taesis archive that Taesion/Taesis was a widow who shared one of the multiroomed houses with her sons and their children, and other houses show shared use of courtyards or passageways between extended families. There are difficulties involved in matching the archeological remnants of individual houses with known families whose archives survive, but even so it is possible to discern a degree of continuity in house use, in which extra walls and rooms were added at various phases of occupation throughout the first three centuries CE (Nevett 2011). The documentary material indicates that houses changed hands frequently, but in general the archeology reflects a pattern of change that saw the development of larger rooms and boundary changes, as households shared fewer, but larger, spaces.

The census data support the picture of ever-changing families from the point at which young men and women marry for the first time and the ensuing variety in household shape and size, especially with respect to children. There are 134 recorded households across these data in which children of fourteen years or younger feature.¹⁰ In a small number of these households the ages of the children are not specified, but we can presume they are either under the age of fourteen, or were so within the fourteen year census period, based on the relatively young ages of the other household members who are listed as their parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles.¹¹ Within these 134 households 296 free children (159 boys, 132 girls, 5 of unknown sex) are recorded. Additionally, there are four children among the lodgers in two households (103-Ar-1 and 187-Ar-2), and across twenty-three households recording slave families we have details of fifty-eight slave children, of whom twenty are boys, twenty-nine girls, and nine of unknown sex.¹²

The majority of these children lived in households with a considerable number of adults, a direct consequence of the phenomenon of a *frèreche*-type arrangement, in which one or more brother brought his new wife into the household. This typically virilocal marriage pattern of Roman Egypt, combined with ancient sex-specific mortality and fertility regimes, led to these *frèreche* arrangements becoming a common stage of the family's life cycle, where married sons and their wives and children lived together in

¹⁰ Fourteen is the age at which boys in Roman Egypt were liable to begin payment of the *laographia*, the poll tax, and girls began to marry (though there is an example of one married girl aged thirteen). See Bagnall and Frier 2006: 111–21, 351–3, table B, appendix 4). For age at marriage in Roman Egypt, see Pudsey 2011.

¹¹ Bagnall and Frier 2006: 103-Ar-5; 117-Ar-7; 33-Ox-2; 103-Ar-1; 173-Ar-9. References to census households here follow Bagnall and Frier's catalog notation, each household with a unique alphanumeric label denoting geographic location and approximate census date.

¹² 117-Ap-4, 117-Ar-3, 145-Ar-9, 159-Ar-4, 173-Ar-3, 187-An-1, 187-Ar-15, 187-Ar-29, 817-Me-1, 201-Ar-1, 201-Ar-10, 215-Ar-2, 215-Ar-3, 243-Ox-1, ???-Me-1, 131-Ar-13, 11?-Ox-1, 13-Ar-18, 145-Oa-2, 173-Ar-21, 89-Pt-10, 89-Pt-59.

Table 24.1 Children registered in the census as living with their cousins

Household ¹	Household Relationships, Age and Sex Where Known
117-Ar-4	Boy (1), father (35), mother (39), paternal uncle (48) and wife (45); 2 male cousins.
117-Ar-7	Boy, mother, stepfather, 2 step-paternal uncles and wives, grandmother, 3 female slaves; 2 female cousins.
117-Ar-11	Boy (4), father, mother (30), paternal uncle and wife (18), paternal uncle (19), paternal aunt (22), grandfather, grandmother (60); sister (10), female cousin (1).
131-Ar-11	Girl, child, divorced father (32), his half-sister; 2 potential cousins: boy (6), child of unknown sex and age.
131-Ox-1	Boy (5), father, mother (25), paternal uncle (20), step-aunts (20, 15), 3 males, 2 females (20, 50), grandfather, step-grandmother (60); male cousin (3).
131-Pr-1	Boy, girl, father (47), mother, paternal uncle (45) and wife, paternal uncles (42, 38) and wives (29, 21); 2 male cousins (6, 4), 3 female cousins (10, 8, 4).
145-Ar-6	Boy (5), father, mother; 2 possible cousins: child (5), boy (2).
145-Ar-20	Boy (8), male (20), his sister-wife (20s), their mother (55), lodger; female cousin.
159-Ar-4	Girl (9), father (33), mother (26), maternal aunt (35), uncle (45), paternal aunt (47), paternal uncle (31), divorced wife (29), slaves: boy (5), mother (33); 2 female cousins: (17, 15), 2 male cousins (19, 8).
159-Ar-13	Girl (13), brother (25); female cousin (12).
159-Ar-21	Girl (3), father (33), mother, paternal uncle, paternal aunt (32), paternal uncle (30s); female cousin.
173-Ar-9	Girl, father (48), mother (38) (siblings), uncle (44) in tax flight; female cousin (12), her mother (38), maternal aunt (38), grandmother (72). Slaves: girl (4), boy, mother (20), her brothers (6, 4), mother (40).
173-Me-3	Girl (4), father (45), mother (40s), paternal uncle (36) and wife (31), paternal uncle (30) and wife (19), grandfather (75); female cousin (4).
173-Pr-10	Boy (5), father (49), mother (21), paternal uncle (44), his sister-wife (40), paternal uncle (30) and wife (child's stepmother) (30), paternal uncle (21) and wife (19); 4 female cousins (12, 8, 5, 1), male cousin (2), two sisters (4, 2); stepbrother (10).
173-Pr-12	Girl (16), father (40); female cousin (13).
187-Ar-4	Boy (1), father (29), mother = siblings, paternal uncle (26) and wife (29); 2 male cousins; grandfather (50s), grandmother (54) of children (1,1,13,?,1). Lodgers (related?): boy (8) and father (44), mother (52) = siblings. Two brothers (32, 32) of 29-year-old wife of declarant's second son, man (26) and his wife (23).
187-Ar-8	Girl (14), father, mother = step-siblings, maternal uncle, maternal uncle (17), maternal aunt (20), maternal aunt, female (29), grandfather (68), grandmother; female cousin (8).
187-Ar-26	Girl (13), father (57), two females (25, 15); potential female cousin (4).
215-Ar-4	Boy (6), girl (3), girl (3), widowed father (33), stepmother (30), paternal uncle (29) and wife (29), paternal uncle (23), grandfather (66), grandmother; female cousin (3).
229-Hm-2	Boy (8), father (57); potential male cousin (6).

Table 24.1 Continued

Household	Household Relationships, Age and Sex Where Known
??-Ar-3	Girl (8), father (57), mother (38), brother of father; male cousin (17), 2 female cousins and their mother (60) = sister in law of declarant; female cousin (12), her mother, and husband's first wife (38). 4 siblings = children of one declarant's brothers. Girl (12), girl and their mother (31) = wife of another brother. 2 females (one is a child).
???-Ar-5	Boy (11), father, mother, brother of father (40) and wife, 2 people, relationships unclear; 3 cousins.

¹Reference in accordance with Bagnall and Frier (2006) and Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford (1997).

Source: information collated from census returns cataloged in Bagnall and Frier (2006) and Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford (1997).

the parental home (Pudsey 2011). One particular example from the census illustrates this phenomenon neatly. In the Prosopite nome, in the early second century, a family of four married brothers between the ages of thirty-eight and forty-seven had at some point each married and introduced their wives into the household (131-Pr-1 = *P.Lond.* II 324.1–24, ca. 131 CE). The youngest of these brothers had one son (age four), the next youngest a son (age twenty) and two daughters (aged eight and four), while the second eldest had a son (age six) and a daughter (age ten) and the eldest a son and a daughter whose ages are not recorded. This residence pattern, of children and their cousins (including adult cousins) living with their parents and (paternal) uncles and their wives, appears to have been very common, especially in rural families. In this particular example the eldest son had taken on the mantle of household declarant for census purposes in place of his father who, presumably and along with the sons' mother, was deceased. Because of virilocal marriage practices, any married daughters (the children's paternal aunts) would have left to join other households and effectively been replaced by the young wives brought into the household; as a consequence, it was very common for children to live with their cousins, their aunts and uncles (particularly paternal uncles). Table 24.1 illustrates the number and details of recorded families in which children were raised with their cousins.

Aunts and uncles featured among the prominent people in children's lives, whether or not they resided in the same household. We see aunts in particular taking on important roles in arranging the care of children: in an apprentice registration document from Oxyrhynchus, Helene acts on behalf of her nephew in placing him as an apprentice weaver, after the death of his father Pasion (*P.Mich.* III 171, 58 CE, in Winter 1933: 71). A fourth-century letter from another paternal aunt who is caring for her brother's orphaned children requests help from a woman who is perhaps the children's god-mother (*SB XIV* 11881, fourth century CE, in Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 357).

In addition to cousins, most children lived with numerous siblings. For example, in Arsinoe, a father (age forty-six) and mother (age forty-three) had two sons (ages ten and three) and four daughters (ages twenty, fourteen, seven, and two).¹³ This pattern of

¹³ 103-Ar-3 = *P.Corn.* 16.1-13, 104/5 CE.

parents with numerous children (often with other family members or resident nonkin) is also common, as are the relatively large age gaps between these children, which are perhaps indicative of stillbirths, young children who had not survived, or young girls who had married out of the household (this last is unlikely where the significant age gaps appear at the younger ages). Table 24.2 illustrates the recorded children with discernable age gaps. Many children recorded also lived alongside other children who were unrelated to them, such as a family in Arsinoe, in which three girls (aged thirteen, eleven, and unknown) lived with their older brother (age twenty-one, who is also married to the thirteen-year-old girl) and their father and mother (aged sixty-three and forty-one, respectively, who are also siblings) and a family of slaves that includes two girls (aged eight and six) and possibly other slave children.¹⁴ It was also common for a family of lodgers to reside with another family, as in the case from Arsinoe in 104/5 CE where two parents and their eight-year-old daughter and two infant sons live with a family of lodgers comprising two sets of parents and four or more children (103-Ar-1 = *PSI* IX 1062, 104/5 CE). Table 24.3 details recorded children who reside with other children unrelated to them. For children recorded in the Romano-Egyptian census, domestic life was most commonly shared with many other children—siblings, step-siblings, cousins, slaves, and lodgers—often resulting in households in which it was typical to have more than four (related and/or unrelated) children with large age gaps between them.

The nature of ancient mortality made grandparents less common than in later (even later premodern) populations, and when we see grandparents they are usually grandmothers (Vuolanto 2002; Parkin 2003: 51–6; Pudsey 2012). In the census data as a whole, there are twenty-nine households in which one or more grandparent is recorded (to a total of forty-eight children); twelve of these grandparents are single grandmothers, and five are single grandfathers. Recorded grandparents (both maternal and paternal) are detailed in Table 24.4. Many of these grandparents are relatively young, most typically in their fifties and sixties, and they often appear in larger families. For example, one record from Soknopaiou Nesos in the Arsinoite nome reveals a family in which two young children (aged six and three) live with their widowed father (age thirty-three), his new wife (age thirty), their new halfsister (age three) and a cousin (age three), their father's two brothers (aged twenty-nine and twenty-three), the eldest of whom had a twenty-nine-year-old wife and three-year-old daughter (the cousin), and their paternal grandfather (age sixty-six) and grandmother (age unknown).¹⁵ Of the recorded grandparents, the oldest grandfather is seventy-five years old, the youngest recorded,

¹⁴ 145-Ar-9 = *P. Meyer* 9, 147 CE.

¹⁵ 215-Ar-4 = *Stud. Pal.* II 3, 215 CE. There is some ambiguity in this census return concerning the supposed remarriage of Aurelius Stotoetis, the declarant and father of three children. His two younger children are both listed as being age three at the time of the census. This may simply be inaccuracy in age recording; children of very young ages were sometimes recorded in the census with less accuracy as to age than older children. If it is accurate, Aurelius Stotoetis either married only once and had three children (since the first wife's name appears only partially, the two "wives" may in fact be the same person), or he (illegally) remarried and fathered a child with his current wife while still married to his first wife.

Table 24.2 Siblings with discernible age gaps as recorded in census households

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
61-Ar-1	Girl (11), boys (3, 1). With father (52), mother (30), some slaves.
75-Ar-3	Boys (16,4). With father, uncle.
103-Ar-3	Boys (16, 10, 3) girls (20, 14, 7, 2). With father (46), mother (43) (siblings).
103-Ar-7	Boys (8, 1). With father (56), mother.
103-Ar-12	Girl (14), boys (8, 20).
117-Ar-2	Boy (2), girls (13, 13). With father (31), mother (28), paternal uncle (32).
117-Ar-11	Boys (4,?), girl (10). With father (?), mother (30), paternal uncle (?) and wife (18) (with daughter), paternal uncle (19), paternal aunt (22), Girl (1).
131-Ar-3	Boys (12, 10, 8), girls (6, 2). With father (46), mother (42) = siblings.
131-He-4	Boy (14), girls (6, 3, 2). With father (31), mother (29) (maternal half-siblings), grandmother (61).
145-Ar-20	Boys (8, 1). With male (20), his sister-wife (20s) and their mother (55) and male lodger
159-Me-1	Boys (5, 14). With divorced father (37).
173-Pr-5	Girl (13), boy (3). With father (69) and mother (52). Girl (13) is married to brother (21) and there is a sister (24). Father has son (35) and daughter (16) by previous marriage—now married to each other.
173-Pr-10	Boys (5, 10), girls (4, 2). With father (49), mother (21). Paternal uncle (44), his sister-wife (40). Paternal uncle (30) and his wife (their child's stepmother) (30). Paternal uncle (21) and his wife (19). Girls (12, 8, 5). Boy (2), girl (1).
173-Pr-15	Girl (1), boys (10, 9). With father (19), mother (16), paternal uncle of 1 year old girl, grandmother (42).
187-Hm-1	Boys (13, 8), girl (0). With father (47), mother (50s) and elder brother (21)
187-Ox-4	Girls (3, 10). With mother (32).
243-Ar-3	Boys (16, 11, 7). With widowed mother (36), 2 male lodgers.
89-Pt-3	Boys (9, 19), girl (?). With father (33).
89-Pt-20	Boys (18, 11, 3), girls (9, 3). With father (40), mother (30s).
89-Pt-27	Girls (5, 16), boys (1, 15). With father (39), mother (37), paternal grandmother (55).
89-Pt-48	Girls (10, 13), boys (8, 15). With father (42), stepmother (25).

Source: information collated from census returns catalogued in Bagnall and Frier 2006 and Bagnall, Frier and Rutherford 1997.

Table 24.3 Unrelated children sharing households, as recorded in the census

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
<i>With lodgers</i>	
103-Ar-1	Girl (8), boy (1), boy, father, mother (26). Lodgers: boy with mother, father, 2 children with mother, father (siblings), male (18), (34) and female slave.
187-Ar-4	Boy (1), father (29) and mother (?) = siblings. Paternal uncle (26) his wife (29), 2 male cousins, grandfather (50s) and grandmother (54) of children (1,1,13,?,1). Lodgers (related?): boy (8) and his father (44), mother (52) = siblings. Two brothers (32, 32) of 29-year-old wife of declarant's second son. Man (26) and his wife (23).
<i>With slaves</i>	
117-Ap-8	Girl (2), mother (18), other female (39). Slaves: girl (3), 2 female lodgers (36, 35).
117-Ar-3	Man, wife (32). Slaves: boy (1), girls (8, 6) with father (29), mother (26). Boy (1) and females (49, 23).
145-Ar-3	Boys (21, 19), girls (18, 15), mother (40) divorced, grandmother (70). Slave: Girl (5).
145-Ar-9	Girls (13, 11), girl; girl of 13 married to the older brother in the main family (21), father (63), mother (41) = half siblings, male (40). Slaves: male (20), male (18), female (8) and their mother, female (6) and her mother (23) and 2 unknown.
159-Ar-4	Girl (9), father (33), mother (26), maternal aunt (35) and uncle (45) who is also paternal uncle, paternal aunt (47), paternal uncle (31), divorced but resident wife (29), 4 cousins: girls (17, 15), boys (19, 8). Slaves: boy (5) and mother (33).
173-Ar-9	Girl, father (48), mother (38) = siblings, uncle (44) in tax flight, female cousin (12), her mother (38) and maternal aunt (38), grandmother (72). Slaves: girl (4), boy (0), mother (20) and her brothers (6, 4) and mother (40).
187-An-1	Man, wife. Slaves: unknown (4) with 12 other slaves.
187-Ar-15	Girl (10); 2 males, 1 male all relationships uncertain. Slaves: unknown sex, mother (36).
187-Ar-30	Woman (60). Slaves: girls (8, 4), their mother (45). Girls (5, 1), their mother (20). Three women (68, 42, 38).
187-Ar-32	Boy (10), divorced father, mother (43). 7 slaves.
187-Me-1	Girl (12) mother (45) freed, and sister (20). Slave: girl (15).
201-Ar-1	Girl (0), father (33), mother (35). Female (54), paternal grandfather (59). Slave: girl (8).
201-Ar-10	2 children of unknown sex, father (33), mother (35) = cousins. Paternal grandmother (54), paternal grandmother (54). Slaves: girl (8), girl (?).
215-Ar-2	Boy (?), mother (?), two females (?, 50). Male and his wife (25). Slaves: girl (14), girl (4) and their mother. Girl (4), girl (0) and their mother.
215-Ar-3	Girl (16), her father, mother and brother, sister (26). Paternal uncle or aunt and cousins. Paternal uncle (40s), paternal uncle and children, 2 females; Girl (10), girl (8). Boy (2), girl. Slaves: unknown (13), girl (10), girl, adult (34) and their mother (49).
215-He-3	Boy (4), father (32), mother (31), paternal uncle (29), paternal aunt (19), grandfather (60). Slaves: male and female and their mother.
243-Ox-1	2 brothers (27, 26). Slaves: boys (3, 0, 0), girl (5) and their mother (24). Male (19).

Table 24.3 Continued

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
117-Ar-12	Boy (8). Slaves: boys (3, 0, 0), girl (5) and their mother (24). Male (19), grandmother (64). Boys (4, 2), female (33).
131-Ar-13	Boy <i>apator</i> and mother (57). Slaves: boy (9), boy, girl, girl and their mother, 1 male.
117-Ox-1	Boy (7), father (40s). Slaves: boys (14, 5), father (50).
131-Ar-20	Slaves: unknown (9), unknown sex, unknown sex. Some adult slaves.
145-Oa-2	Girl (17), her father (53) her half-sister (16) to mother (50). Slave: girl (6).
173-Ar-21	Boy (12), boy (9), their step-siblings: boys (12, 10), their father (34) and mother, older halvesisters (29, 30). Slaves: unknown (13) and adult slaves.
215-Ar-9	Girl (10), older brother and sister. 3 slaves.
89-Pt-10	Boy (9), brother (19). Mother (37). Slaves: boy (3), girls (2, 1), mother (36).
89-Pt-51	Boy (1), boy, mother (35), and older brother (16). Slaves: boy (5), woman (28).

Source: Information collated from census returns cataloged in Bagnall and Frier (2006) and Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford (1997).

Table 24.4 Grandparents as recorded in the census households

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
<i>Paternal grandparents</i>	
89-Hm-1	Boy (1). Father (20), uncle, aunt (17), aunt (14), paternal grandfather.
117-Ap-6	Boy (1), girl (0). Father (29), mother (18), aunt (24), aunt (18), paternal grandfather (59) and grandmother (53).
117-Ar-6	Boy, girl. Father (56), mother (53), paternal grandmother (75).
117-Ar-7	Boy. Mother and stepfather, 2 step-paternal uncles and their wives, 2 female cousins, paternal grandmother, 3 female slaves.
117-Ar-11	Boy (4). Father, mother (30), paternal uncle and wife (18), paternal uncle (19), paternal aunt (22), paternal grandfather and grandmother (60), female cousin, female cousin (1).
131-He-4	Boy (14), girls (6, 3, 2). Father (31), mother (29) (maternal half-siblings), paternal grandfather (61).
131-Ox-1	Boy (5). Father, mother (25), paternal uncle (20), step-aunts (20, 15), 3 other males, 2 females (20, 50), paternal grandfather and step-grandmother (60), male cousin (3).
159-Ar-1	Boy (5), boy (4). Father (33), mother (22), paternal grandfather.
159-Ar-10	Girl. Father (29), mother (20s), paternal uncle (20s), paternal aunt (14), father's male cousin paternal grandfather (54).
173-Ar-9	Girl. Father (48), mother (38) (= siblings), uncle (44) in tax flight, female cousin (12), her mother (38) and maternal aunt (38), paternal grandmother (72). Slaves: girl (4), boy (0), mother (20) and her brothers (6, 4) and mother (40).
173-Ar-11	Girl (3), boy (1). Mother (32) (different fathers), paternal uncle (14), mother's male cousin, maternal step-grandmother (48).

Table 24.4 Continued

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
173-Me-3	Girl (4). Father (45), mother (40s), paternal uncle (36) and his wife (31), paternal uncle (30) and his wife (19), female cousin (4), paternal grandfather (75).
173-Pr-15	Girl (1), boys (10, 9). Father (19), mother (16), paternal uncle of 1-year-old girl, paternal grandmother (42).
187-Ar-4	Boy (1). Father (29), mother (= siblings), paternal uncle (26) his wife (29), 2 male cousins, paternal grandfather (50s) and grandmother (54) of children (1,1,13,?,1). Lodgers: boy (8) and his father (44), mother (52) (= siblings), two brothers (32, 32) of 29 year old wife of declarant's second son, man (26) and his wife (23).
201-Ar-1	Girl (0). Father (33), mother (35), female (54), paternal grandfather (59).
201-Ar-9	Girl (6). Father (26) widowed, paternal uncle (46), paternal aunt (56), paternal grandfather (56) and great-grandmother (74).
201-Ar-10	2 children, father (33), mother (35) (= cousins), paternal grandmother (54), paternal grandmother (54).
215-Ar-4	Boy (6), girl (3), girl (3). Father (33), widowed, and stepmother (30), paternal uncle (29) and his wife (29), paternal uncle (23), female cousin (3), paternal grandfather (66) and grandmother.
215-He-3	Boy (4). Father (32), mother (31), paternal uncle (29), paternal aunt (19), paternal grandfather (60).
117-Ar-12	Slaves: boys (3, 0, 0), girl (5), their mother (24), male (19), grandmother (64).
89-Pt-27	Girls (5, 16), boys (1, 15). Father (39), mother (37), paternal grandmother (55).
89-Pt-36	Boy (4), girl. Father (29), mother (30), paternal grandmother.
<i>Maternal grandparents</i>	
11-Ar-1	Boy (9). Father (55), maternal grandmother (70).
131-He-2	Boy (3). Father (28), mother (20), maternal grandmother (50s).
145-Ar-3	Boys (21, 19), girls (18, 15). Mother (40) divorced, maternal grandmother (70).
187-Ar-8	Girl (14). Father, mother (= step-siblings), 2 maternal uncles (one 17), 2 maternal aunts (one 20), female (29), female cousin (8), maternal grandfather (68) and grandmother.
201-Ar-8	Girl (1). Mother (21), maternal grandmother (50).
131-Ar-18	Girl (5), boy (< 5), girl (10), unknown (13). Father, mother, maternal grandfather.
<i>Grandparents who are maternal and paternal</i>	
159-Ar-11	Girl (2). Father (40), mother (= siblings), grandfather (73), grandmother = siblings.

Source: Information collated from census returns cataloged in Bagnall and Frier (2006) and Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford (1997).

fifty-six, though the rest are in their fifties.¹⁶ We see a slightly different pattern in the ages of recorded grandmothers, the eldest of which is also recorded at seventy-five but the youngest at forty-two.¹⁷ The rest are spread across a wide age range, with the majority of the recorded grandmothers in their seventies and in their forties. It would appear that the ages of grandparents recorded in the census, though admittedly a small sample, do not vary significantly from the broadly typical sex-specific mortality and fertility patterns in which women became parents and grandparents quite young, men later, and grandmothers outlived grandfathers (Saller 1994: 48, table 3.1a; Pudsey 2011). Given the virilocal marriage patterns common to families in Roman Egypt, it is perhaps unsurprising that paternal rather than maternal grandparents are far more common in the households of their grandchildren, highlighting the strength of the paternal family line in Romano-Egyptian families. Grandparents were, demographically speaking, uncommon, but they were present in families across the social spectrum and also featured as prominent adults in children's lives; we can trace elements of their obligations toward, and relationships with, their grandchildren either in the absence of their own sons or daughters (their grandchildren's parents) and as carers in addition to them.

That grandmothers in particular seem to have held an important place in the lives of children is evidenced by a number of documents, most notably the Apollonius archive from Heptakomia in the Apollonopolite nome in which we see Eudaimonis, the mother of the *strategos* Apollonius, showing great concern for her grandchildren. Within this archive Eudaimonis appears as a prominent figure in the family and is both well educated and powerful (Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 44–9, 63–5). In the nine letters she sends to Apollonius and the two to his wife Aline, she demonstrates concern for the family in a number of ways. In one letter (*P.Brem.* 63, 117 CE) she writes to Aline, who had left Hermopolis for Heptakomia to give birth, that she hopes the baby will be a boy, and she informs Aline that her own daughter Souerous had given birth, adding the greetings of Eudaimonis' granddaughter Heraidous, who is apparently working diligently with her studies whilst with her grandmother. In the other letters, against the backdrop of the Jewish War, Eudaimonis refers to her grandchildren with affection and states her concern that they be kept from harm (e.g., *P.Giss.* 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, *P.Flor.* III 332). Here a strong character is found in a paternal grandmother, and her authority and concern over the children in her family is never disputed.

In everyday life, grandparents are relied on to care for children in the absence of either one or both of the children's parents; for example, in letters we see women writing to their adult sons and sending the greetings of those sons' children for whom the grandmother is caring (e.g., *BGU* II 380, after 212 CE = Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 258). In a legal sense too, grandmothers, particularly paternal grandmothers, played an important role in the family network and the lives of their grandchildren. For instance, in an application for the registration of a child we see a rather typical case of a paternal grandmother wishing to register her grandson, since his father Aurelius Theodorus has left

¹⁶ Oldest: 173-Me-3 = *Stud. Pal.* XX 11, 174. Youngest: 201-Ar-8 = *BGU* I 97, 203 CE.

¹⁷ *BGU* VII 1579, 118/9 CE and 117-Ar-7 and 173-Pr-15 = *P. Brux.* I 15, 174 CE.

for military service (*P.Oxy.* LIV 3754, 320 CE). In instances where children have been orphaned or have become fatherless, grandmothers take on the role of guardian (sometimes unofficially) for their grandchildren (*P.Fouad* 35, 48 CE; *SB V* 7558, 172–3 CE).

Stepparents and blended families also appear frequently in the census data and reflect both the prevailing mortality conditions and the tendency of men to remarry after divorce or widowhood; women too would often remarry, but not always (Pudsey 2012). Stepfathers are common across the Greco-Roman East (Huebner 2009; *P.Fouad* I 33, first century CE). The converse of such child-filled households is relatively rare: there are remarkably few households recorded in which children live in small families with a single parent. In only thirty-two instances, it seems, did children have a single parent; in thirteen of these cases, the household appears to have comprised one to three young children and (in almost all cases) their mother, and in a further five cases there is an older brother or sister. The remaining fourteen of these recorded families show that, in the absence of one of the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and adult slaves were resident, as can be seen in the cases listed in Table 24.5. In twenty of the recorded households there was an only child (not only in the sense of being without siblings but also the only child in the household). Table 24.6 details these cases. These are all urban households, and the child in most cases is either the very young offspring of young parents (so it is not unlikely that these families would have gone on to include more children) or has adult siblings who are still young.

It can be argued that we see here a reflection of the trend for parents who were hedging their bets, so to speak, to have large numbers of children to offset the fear of losing younger children to high rates of regionally specific and age-specific mortality. This sort of response to high infant mortality, in addition to infant and child mortality itself, had the direct effect of creating large age gaps between siblings—something we see quite clearly in many households (see Parkin in this volume). The domestic experience of most children in Roman Egypt in terms of their socialization would have differed markedly from those of the elite Roman children discussed in the chapters by McWilliam and Vuolanto in this volume. Of course, these age gaps might also have been the natural consequence of child mortality in the household. Both historical demographic and modern anthropological demographic studies have argued the case for such high fertility among the poor across the premodern world, as children can be valuable in terms of their economic contributions to the household, especially if they bring in contributions from outside of the household (see Hin 2011). It is not difficult to imagine that ordinary families outside of the metropolitan elites in Egypt responded to high mortality by having more children.

CHILDREN OF WIDOWS

The socioeconomic context of children's experiences—the second aspect of childhood mentioned at the start of this chapter—relates to children outside the household. Children in different social and cultural milieu and physical environments in the ancient world would have experienced life very differently, as is apparent from the range

Table 24.5 Children with single parent, as recorded in the census

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
<i>Children with single parent and no other resident adults</i>	
33-Ar-2	Boy (5), mother
103-Ar-9	Boys (5, 4, 1), mother
117-Ar-5	Boy (10), girl (8), girl, widowed mother
145-Ar-1	Girl (13), mother
145-Ar-24	Boy (3 or 13), father
159-Me-1	Boy (5), boy (14), divorced father
229-Hm-2	Boy (8), father, potential cousin
173-Pr-11	Boy (15), widowed mother
187-Ar-29	Girls (4, 13), mother
187-Ox-4	Girls (3, 10), mother
243-Ar-1	Boy (6), mother
257-Ar-1	Boys (5, 1), mother
???-Me-1	Boy (3), mother
<i>Children with single parent and other resident adults</i>	
187-Me-1	Girl (12), older sister (20), mother
215-Ar-11	Boy (3), father and older brother (19)
89-Pt-3	Boy (9), girl, father and older brother (19)
89-Pt-5	Boy (12), older brother (25), mother
89-Pt-10	Boy (9), older brother (19), mother
11-Ar-1	Boy (9), father and grandfather
89-Hm-1	Boy (1), father, paternal uncle and 2 paternal aunts
131-Ar-11	Two children, divorced father and half-sister, 2 potential cousins
145-Ar-3	Girl (15), older brothers (21, 19), older sister (18), divorced mother, grandmother
201-Ar-9	Girl (6), widowed father, paternal uncle, paternal aunt, paternal grandfather and great grandmother
201-Ar-8	Girl (1), mother, maternal grandmother
215-Ar-2	Boy, mother, another two women, a man and his wife (potential aunts/uncles)
243-Ar-3	Boys (7, 11, 16), mother, wife and children of (deceased) paternal uncle
11?-Ox-1	Boy (7), father, slave family
131-Ar-13	Boy, mother, slave family
89-Pt-26	Child (5), father and one other person
89-Pt-37	Girl (2), father, older brother (17), another woman
89-Pt-51	Boy (1), boy, older brother (16), mother, slave family
89-Pt-59	Girl (8), father, paternal uncle and his wife

Source: Information collated from census returns cataloged in Bagnall and Frier (2006) and Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford (1997).

Table 24.6 Only children in the household, as recorded in the census

Household	Details of Household Relationships and Age and Sex Where Known
11-Ar-1	Boy (9), father (55), maternal grandmother (70)
33-Ar-2	Boy (5), mother
103-Ar-5	Boy, father (21), mother (18) (=siblings)
103-Ar-11	Boy (6), father (43), mother (25)
131-He-2	Boy (3), father (28), mother (20), maternal grandmother (50s)
145-Ar-1	Girl (13), mother (38)
145-Ly-1	Girl (8), mother (40), another adult woman
145-Ox-1	Girl (3), father and mother
159-Ar-10	Girl, father (29), mother (20s), paternal uncle (20s), paternal aunt (14), father's male cousin (?), paternal grandfather (54)
159-Ar-11	Girl (2), father (40) and mother (= siblings)
159-Hm-3	Boy (8), sister (40), father (72), mother (57)
173-Me-1	Boy (1), sister (17), father (51)
187-Ar-22	Boy (5), father (61), mother (40). Stepsister (22) and stepbrother (18) on mother's side. Stepbrother (30) and stepsister (18) from father's previous two marriages
215-Ar-6	Boy (3), father (50), mother (49), paternal uncle (47) and his wife (32)
215-He-2	Boy (1), father (37), mother (25), paternal aunt (33) and father's half-sister (?)
???-Me-1	Boy (3), mother
89-Pt-5	Boy (12), older brother (25), mother
89-Pt-26	Child (5), father (50), one other person
89-Pt-37	Girl (2), father, older brother (17), another woman
89-Pt-59	Girl (8), father, paternal uncle and his wife

Source: Information collated from census returns cataloged in Bagnall and Frier (2006) and Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford (1997).

of experiences represented within this volume and as is equally apparent across the varied environments across Roman Egypt.

Demographic circumstances can be seen to have shaped parents' treatment of their children; high rates of male mortality ensured the common occurrence (and threat) of fatherlessness (Saller 1994; Huebner and Ratzan 2009; Malouta 2009). The Roman-Egyptian census, along with other documentary papyri, attest to just how common it was for children (particularly boys) to be without their fathers (Malouta 2007, 2009). Widows appear frequently in legal documents and in petitions seeking to protect their children's financial interests.¹⁸ In Roman law, on the death of the father, a guardian

¹⁸ Hanson 2000; Evans Grubbs 2002: 236–60, esp. 257–60; Rathbone 2006; Huebner 2009: 63.

would be appointed to look after the child's financial interests (Saller 1994: 183–5; Evans Grubbs 2002: 23), yet we see many examples of widowed mothers acting as guardians in Roman Egypt, concerned to protect the interests of their children (Vuolanto 2002; Pudsey 2012). In one particularly striking example, a widowed mother acts as legal guardian of her minor children, petitioning the local *exegetes* for permission to renounce claims to land mortgaged by her late husband that is now in the hands of creditors and accruing taxes for which her sons are liable (*SB* V 7568, 36 CE). In another petition a minor complains to an acting *strategos* about his mother, whom he accuses of committing fraud in her capacity as his guardian (*P.Oxy.* VI 898, 123 CE). Marriage contracts regularly made provisions for guardianship of the children upon the death of either one of the spouses to allow the widow to be guardian of the children, often in conjunction with another guardian.¹⁹ A number of wills also make provision for the sole guardianship of the children by the widowed mother (e.g., *P.Mich.* V 322, 46 CE).

There is also evidence to show that widowed mothers who remarried frequently made efforts to acknowledge all their children equally in their wills, irrespective of whether or not they had shared the same father (Huebner 2009: 72–3). In wills, and even in marriage documents, provision was made for the financial and day-to-day care of children in the event of the death of a spouse; widows acted as guardians to protect their children's inheritance. And if and when widows remarried (though there is evidence in the census to suggest they did not, even when they had very young children; see Pudsey 2012), their wills demonstrate that they sought to protect the wealth of their children equally, even that of children from a new husband.

CHILDREN OUTSIDE THE HOME

At the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, parents were driven by economic circumstance to expose, pawn, sell, or pledge their children (Vuolanto 2003). Pledging of children—as opposed to outright sale—appears to have occurred across the late Roman world, very much as a last resort when economic circumstances dictated it. Documents from Egypt illustrate the practice in large metropoleis such as Oxyrhynchus.²⁰ Such pledges were sometimes made permanent when parents were unable to repay loans, but the practice had the intent and the outcome of keeping families together (pp. 169–79). The practice of apprenticing children who were old enough to work could be considered a strategy for keeping the family together and allowing children to be economically productive. In apprenticeship contracts, the parent or guardian would contract their child out for a certain period of time to learn a trade, often at the tradesman's expense. In one contract

¹⁹ Vuolanto 2002. See also Evans Grubbs 2002: 257–8; Pudsey 2012.

²⁰ *P.Oxy.* X 1295 (second/third century CE); *P.Oxy.* IX 1206 (335 CE); *P.Oxy.* XVI 1895 (554 CE); *P.Lond.* VI 1915 (330–340 CE); *P.Ryl. Copt.* 310 (fourth or fifth century CE).

a widowed mother, in her capacity as guardian, apprentices out her child to a weaver—a respectable and economically fruitful trade for the child to learn (*P.Oxy.* XLI 2971, 66 CE). Contracts such as this are numerous amongst the papyri of Roman Egypt; some of these concern slave children but often those involved are free children; always they are boys.²¹

Outside the domestic environment, children engaged with social institutions, particularly in urban environments; in the upper echelons of the metropoleis we see children writing home to their parents from their schools (Cribiore 2001: 111–23). In one such letter Trophimus writes from his school in Alexandria to his father in Oxyrhynchus, apparently responding to the latter's questioning of his behavior while away from home: "You wrote me in your letter that I am boasting in the presence of Diodorus because I sent you money: but I do not boast idly; I did send it by Philoxenus . . . You wrote to me: 'You are staying in Alexandria with your paramour.' Write me, who is my girlfriend? . . ." (*P.Oxy.* VIII 1160, third or fourth century CE, adapted from trans. of Winter 1933: 61–2). A father's concerns for his son's conduct and progress at his school are manifest here in the son's adamant (and irritated?) dismissal of them. In other letters written by children we see aspects of their lives as part of a social institution outside of the family, especially in the cases of Greek families from the large cities. A child's worry and homesickness are evident in the letter by a boy, Thonis, who writes to express his impatience and concern that his parents visit him and make the necessary payment to his teacher; he even signs off the letter with a plea to his father to remember to feed his pigeons (*SB* III 6262, third century CE, in Cribiore 2001: 112). One father, Cornelius, writes to his son Hierax with great affection from the family and some strong words of advice: "Cornelius to his sweetest son, Hierax, greeting. All our household warmly salutes you and all those with you . . . take care not to offend any of the persons at home . . . give your undivided attention to your books, devoting yourself to learning, and then they will bring you profit" (*P.Oxy.* III 531, second century CE). In such metropolitan social groups, girls also often had access to education: the young girl Heraïdous, in the archive of Apollonius the *strategos*, is learning to read (*P.Giss.* I 80, 78, 85, third century CE).

The few surviving letters between children and their parents reveal the significant educational and pastoral roles played by the teachers, children's affection for their families, and parental concern for their children's well-being and progress—all familiar aspects of parent–child relationships.

CONCLUSION

The documentary material, private letters, and archeological evidence for domestic architecture in Roman Egypt allow us to shed light on some key aspects of children and their experiences of childhood in an ancient population. It is abundantly clear that

²¹ Bradley 1985, 1991. Note also: *SB* 1023b, 36 CE; *P.Mich.* II 121 recto II 8, 42 CE; *PSI* X 1132, 61 CE; *P.Oxy.* XLI 2971, 66 CE; *P.Tebt.* II 385, 117 CE; *SB* XIV 11982, 554 CE; *P.Cair. Masp.* III 67305, 568 CE.

demographic, biological, socioeconomic, and cultural factors all played vital roles in shaping these experiences and the nature of adult–child relationships. The documentary papyri and the census material suggest that nonelite children were raised within a range of family formations and obligations. These domestic arrangements were determined by responses to high levels of mortality and particular patterns of demographic behavior in relation to marriage and childrearing. Children were socialized among many of their siblings, cousins, and nonrelated children as a matter of course and resided not only with their parents but also with their (paternal) uncles and those uncles' wives and children; lodgers and slaves frequently formed familial units that shared the same home, and step-parents and stepsiblings were common. Grandparents were less typical, though those that appear are usually paternal grandmothers who are relatively young. It was rare for children to be raised in a domestic environment without other children. Socialization for nonelite children in Roman Egypt was achieved both through their relationships with adults and other children at home and outside the home with extended family members or their educators. Demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural factors determined the degree to which children were cared for and were circulated through the practices of infant exposure (and collection), breastfeeding, weaning, and wet nursing. Children were active outside the domestic setting and formed an important part of the economic activity in Roman Egypt, particularly through apprenticeships.

Much recent work on the history of children and childhood has focused on tracing emotional relationships between children and their parents. It is in this context that we see a number of documents detailing affection, concern from fathers and mothers as well as from other family members. In Roman Egypt, the birth or impending birth of a child was the focal point of attention and affection for the whole family, as was concern for children's welfare. We see private letters in which the birth of a child was a source of concern, pride, and celebration for the whole family. For instance, one woman Thermouthas wrote a letter to her brother Apolinarios about some financial matters and stated that she would sail downriver to meet him, bringing with her two other women in the family, Valeria and Herois, who is pregnant. It is the women in this household who plan to stay with Herois for the birth of her baby before they all sail together to meet Apolinarios.²² In another letter, a father exhibits great pride at being responsible for the selection of a child's name.²³ Siblings show frequent concern for their nieces and nephews, as in a letter that Zoilos writes to his mother, Theodora, about his sister Techosous' pregnancy and premature childbirth at seven months (*SB XVI 12606*, third century CE). Some documents illustrate the family's support for one another under tragic circumstances; in one letter Thaubas writes to her father and asks him to visit, after her sister Herennia had died in the premature childbirth of a stillborn child (*P. Fouad 75*, 64 CE). Affection between adults and their children can also be observed in cases where children are away from home, at school. In spite of what may appear, on the surface, to

²² *BGU I 261*, second/third century CE, in Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 189–90.

²³ *I. I 84*, fourth century CE, in Rowlandson 1988: 226.

suggest abandonment, neglect, or lack of interest, the material from Roman Egypt contradicts any suggestion that children lacked affection from their parents; the wealth of private letters between family members shows a great deal of affection and concern for well-being and living conditions of children within the family.

In the material from Roman Egypt we find documented cases of some of the factors in both the child's experience of childhood and the adult conception of it. The history of childhood is a relatively recent one, and one that has been largely institutional in its focus. Book-length studies on the experiences of children and childhood in particular periods and places have tended to investigate child labor legislation, the roles and functions of schools, slavery, and so on; these are areas where documentation from historical periods survives in relative abundance, so it is of course only natural that historians have focused their attentions on them. By comparison, there has been little emphasis on the overall experience of childhood itself, especially in terms of commonalities and variety between places and contexts (with a notable recent exception in Laes 2011). The material from Roman Egypt illustrates that, for children in diverse socioeconomic groups, life both within and outside the family home was varied, but childhood as a stage of life and relationships between children and their parents were usually recognized and appreciated in ways that one can imagine would have been familiar and typical to a significant degree across the ancient world. In a well-known letter from Oxyrhynchus, from one young boy to his father, we see an all-too-familiar aspect of a child's daily life and experience. Theon writes sulkily to express his disappointment at his father's refusal to take him to the city of Alexandria: "... If you do not wish to take me with you to Alexandria, I won't take your hand or greet you again. So if you do not wish to take me with you, that's that! ... If you do not send for me, I won't eat, won't drink! There! I pray for your good health. ..." ²⁴—a striking example of a very familiar aspect of adult-child relationships.

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²⁴ *P.Oxy.* I 119, second/third century CE, adapted from trans. in Winter 1933: 60.

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CHAPTER 25

ADOPTION AND FOSTERAGE IN THE ANCIENT EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

SABINE R. HUEBNER

INTRODUCTION

HIGH infant mortality in any society before the demographic transition required that parents produce numerous offspring to increase the chance that they had an heir surviving them who would also take care of them in their old age. On the other hand, too many children surviving to adulthood could be a huge strain on a family's finances. This was especially true of girls, since daughters could also expect to receive a share of the family property, often in the form of a dowry, long before their parents' death. One means of regulating family size in ancient societies was the exposure of children, but this should not necessarily be equated with the killing of unwanted offspring. There was a real chance that children would be picked up, most often by someone who saw them as an investment and who planned on raising them as slaves; other times, if they were lucky, by a childless couple who raised them like their own child (cf. Evans Grubbs in this volume). As common as the practice of exposure might have been, in this paper we shall focus only on children (whether ceded by their parents, orphaned, exposed, abandoned, or sold) who were taken in and raised as natural children, not as slaves. There was one decisive difference between fosterage and adoption. Fosterage gave the orphaned or abandoned child a new home but did not involve any change in filiation or status. It was mainly concerned with the child's welfare.¹ Adoption, on the other hand, had the primary goal of preserving the family and lineage of the adopter. The adoptee

¹ For fosterage in the Greek East see Corbett 1983 and Bremmer 2000; for fosterage in the Roman West see Sigismund-Nielsen 1987, 1999; Corbier 1999.

was transferred from one filial relationship to another, “from a ‘natural’ relationship to a ‘fictional’ one, but one which is in most respects legally equivalent” (Goody 1976: 69). Formal adoption usually entailed changing the name of the adoptee to that of his adopter and bestowing on him the status of heir to his adoptive father. Ties with the family of origin were usually cut. We have evidence from throughout the Eastern Mediterranean that in antiquity close kin were the preferred candidates for adoption, often a son of a brother or sister. Foundlings of unknown parentage were raised as foster children rather than formally adopted.

Compared with its equivalent in the Roman West, adoption practice as a family strategy in the Greek East is understudied. We have very useful regional studies by Stone, Owen, and Mitchell (1991) on ancient Mesopotamia, by Rubinstein (1993, 1999, Rubinstein et al. 1991) on adoption in classical and Hellenistic Athens, by Stavrianopoulou (1993) on the epigraphic evidence of adoption practice in early Roman Rhodes, and by Kurylowicz (1984) on the attestation of adoption in papyri from Greco-Roman Egypt. However, an attempt to draw a general picture of adoption practice in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean from these local studies is thus far lacking.

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SOCIETIES

We are well informed about adoption practice in Babylonia, thanks to the considerable number of adoption contracts that have come down to us.² The Code of Hammurabi, from the last years of the reign of the Babylonian king Hammurabi (1792–1750 BCE)³ and other ancient Babylonian law codes—such as the “Laws of Eshnunna,” a century or two older than the Code of Hammurabi and one of the first written codes of law in recorded history (Yaron 1988), and the Middle Assyrian Law Code, which was composed probably five hundred years later, between 1450 and 1250 BCE (Driver and Miles 1935)—provide us with the legal background to these adoptions. Unlike adoptions in classical Greece and Rome, it seems that in ancient Mesopotamia children were usually adopted immediately after birth or at least as infants. The reason to give up one’s own children for adoption was typically the inability to raise them due to poverty.⁴

Issues that are addressed in the written contracts between the adopter and the natural parents (or in the rare case that the adoptee was already an adult, by the adoptee himself) include the name the adopted child would take, his status and inheritance rights, his rights and obligations toward his adoptive parents (e.g., their care and support in old age), and the impossibility of the natural parents reclaiming the child at a later point.

² Ellis 1975: 130–51; Grosz 1987: 138; Malul 1990: 104; Podany et al. 1991–1993: 39–52; Stone and Owen 1991; Yaron 1995: 173.

³ Driver and Miles 1952: 383–405; Westbrook 1993; Stol 1995; Roth 1997.

⁴ Driver and Miles 1952: 388; Greengus 1995: 469, 479; Stol 1995: 485, 491–2; Stol and Wiggermann 2000: 125–8.

Motivations for adoption were the wish of a childless couple for a male heir and the desire to have someone to care for them in their old age. The law codes of Hammurabi reveal that candidates for adoption were not necessarily orphans, for, if the adoptee injured his adoptive parents or the adoptive parents did not take care of the adoptee, the code stipulates that the adoptee should return to his natural father (§185–6, §190).

Not only childless people resorted to adoption. It was not uncommon for adopters to have their own sons and daughters and nonetheless to adopt a son or daughter who inherited together with the natural children. And not only one son was adopted; we have two cases where a man adopted three brothers to whom he promised to leave his property in return for maintenance in old age. We also find that adult males and females were adopted under the condition that they marry a natural child of the adoptee, that is, adoption as sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, respectively. If a man had no sons but only daughters, through the adoption of a son-in-law he would win a male for the household while making sure that his property would pass to his own daughter's children and not to the children of his adoptive son by the latter's wife, who was an outsider to the family. If the adoptive son later decided to leave his wife and marry another, he lost all inheritance rights and had to leave his adoptive father's household empty-handed. We have several instances recorded in the sources in which a man adopted a son (who was supposed to marry a daughter) even though he had sons of his own. These kinds of adoptions served an economic purpose: the adopted sons-in-law usually came from propertied families and had already inherited from their own father. By adoption they brought their property into their wives' families while inheriting more upon their adoptive fathers' death, thus concentrating the property in one family. Females were also adopted. Fathers, or if they were no longer alive their widows or the girl's siblings, gave them up for adoption. Girls were adopted as daughters, for support in old age, as a means of alliance with another family or as future daughters-in-law (Paulissian 1999: 15–21). Women could apparently adopt in conjunction with their husbands (Stone, Owen, and Mitchell 1991: 41–8; Paulissian 1999: 11, 26, 33–4).

Neither the Hebrew Bible nor Rabbinic law provides any rules for adoption of children, and it has been often stressed that the examples of taking in a child in the Old Testament come from outside Israelite culture (Donner 1969: 87–119; De Vaux 1997: 51–2). Even in these cases, furthermore, adoption seems to have been a private, informal act within traditional family structures to provide for an orphaned child or to give a childless man or woman someone to nurture and as a security for old age: Abraham takes in his servant Eliezer (Genesis 15:1–4); Moses is saved by the daughter of the Pharaoh (Exodus 2:10); Mordecai takes in his orphaned cousin Esther (Esther 2:7). We should thus speak of fosterage here rather than formal adoption, because ties to the family of origin were not cut and the child was not given the full status of a natural one. The reason that formal adoption of a child does not seem to have played a major role in ancient Israelite society may be that other family strategies, such as the practice of polygamy and levirate marriage, also provided a couple with a male heir, or orphans with foster parents.

THE CLASSICAL GREEK WORLD

For the Greek world we have evidence that adoptions were a part of family life from the onset of recorded history. An example from the mythical age is Oedipus, exposed soon after birth by his natural father, the king of Thebes, and raised as a son by the king and queen of Corinth, who did not have any children of their own. While growing up, Oedipus' adoptive parents never told him that he was not their natural son (Hom. *Od.* 11.271–80; Soph. *Oed. Tyr.*).

In contrast to Rome (where the adoptee took on the *nomen* and *cognomen* of his adoptive father and added to these the *gentilicium* of his natural father, with the termination – *anus*), in the Greek-speaking world adoption could not be so easily recognized from the name alone. Here, an individual was usually just called “x, son of y.” The adoptee would simply drop his natural father's name and take on his adoptive father's name as his patronymic. After his adoption by Polybus, Oedipus, son of Laius, would become Oedipus, son of Polybus. Nor did the Greeks differentiate between the Roman concepts of *adoptio* (the adoption of a person still under paternal power) and *adrogatio* (the adoption of a legally independent person), because they did not have the concept of *patria potestas*, which was the crucial factor in determining the kind of adoption according to Roman law.⁵ For Sparta we know only that if an individual wanted to adopt a child, he had to do it before the kings (Herod. 6.57). For Thebes, Aristotle mentions the “Laws of Adoption,” which the Corinthian Philolaos gave to the Thebans in order to preserve the number of the lots (*Pol.* 2.9.7.1274b). It is only for Gortyn and Athens that we have more detailed information about adoption practice.

The so-called Law Code of the city-state of Gortyn on Crete, dating to the middle of the fifth century BCE, contains several provisions concerning adoption (Bücheler and Zitelmann 1885; Willetts 1967). First, the one who wanted to adopt could choose whomever he wanted (X 33). Adoptions had to be declared by the adopter in the marketplace before the citizen body to become valid (X 35). Natural children were no bar to adoption: sons were adopted when there were no natural sons but also when the adopter had sons and daughters of his own (XI 6; X 48). If the adopter had no other legitimate heirs, his adopted son would inherit his entire estate. In return he had to take over all of his adoptive father's social and religious obligations (X 40). If there were natural sons, the adopted son would inherit equally with his adoptive sisters, that is, half a son's share (X 48). If the adoptee failed to produce legitimate offspring, upon his death the estate went back to the clansmen (*epiballontes*) of the adopter (XI 6). Women and unfree persons were not allowed to adopt (XI 18), nor could those under age or those who had been adopted themselves (XI 6; X 48). It was possible to revoke an adoption. For this the adopter again had to declare his intention in the marketplace and had to pay a fine that went to his former adoptive son as compensation (XI 10).

⁵ For the differences between *adrogatio* and *adoptio*, see Lindsay 2009: 48, 74–5.

As far as we can draw conclusions from the wording of the law, adoptions by will were not known.

Our main sources for adoption in classical Athens are the forensic speeches from the fourth century BCE, especially those by Isaeus that involve disputes about adoption, inheritance, status, and lawful succession. The main purpose of adoption in Athens was to prevent the extinction of an *oikos* (Isae. 7.30–1, 42; [Demosth.] 44.43). Adoption in Athens was not merely a private and familial affair; the state had a strong interest in the preservation of the *oikos*. The *oikos* was the basic legal, religious, and economic unit of society, and a male head of household was essential for its proper functioning. The adoptee had to be an Athenian citizen (Aesch. 3.21) and usually, if not always, belonged to the closer circle of relatives. Only men who had no natural sons were allowed to adopt (Isae. 2.13–4, 10.9; [Demosth.] 46.14; 24), quite unlike adoption practice in the ancient Near East, Gortyn, and Rome, where having children of one's own was no hindrance to adoption. Πιοιτὸς (*poiētos*) or θετὸς υἱός (*thētos huios*) were the terms used for an adopted son and a natural son was a γνήσιος υἱός (*gnesios huios*). Women and children were not able to adopt (Isae. 7.25, 10.10).

There were three different kinds of adoption in classical Athens: (1) while the adopter was still alive (*inter vivos*, to use the Latin terminology); (2) by testament after his death; or (3) posthumously.⁶ In the case of adoption *inter vivos*, the adoptee acquired the same rights and obligations as a natural son (Isae. 2.14, 7.1; Demosth. 41.3; Plut. *Themist.* 32.1–3; cf. Ghiggia 1999, chap. 5). He became heir to his adoptive father's property and was obliged to care for him in his old age and, after his death, to provide him with a proper burial and perform the customary funeral rights. All kinship ties with his natural father and paternal family were cut ([Demosth.] 44, 21–2; Rubinstein 1993: 22). He could return to his natal home only when he left offspring in his adoptive father's household (Demosth. 41.4). Adoption did not cut the relationship ties with the biological mother and her family and therefore did not affect the inheritance rights of the adopted child from his maternal side. This once again underlines the fact that the main preoccupations regarding adoptions concerned inheritance rights.

By contrast to Gortyn, where an adoption simply had to be announced to the assembly to become valid (X; XI), in Athens the procedure was much more complex. Ghiggia contends that in archaic times a simple announcement to the assembly also sufficed; choice of an adoptee lay entirely in the hands of the adopter. Solon later gave laws regarding who could adopt and be adopted (Ghiggia 1999: 85–6). Finally, in the reform of Cleisthenes, adoption had to be announced before the phratry and deme, who had to give their consent to the adoption. The procedure of presentation and enrollment in the father's phratry seems to have been essentially the same for adopted

⁶ Cf. Harrison 1968: 82–96; Rubinstein 1999, who argued for just two different categories: *inter vivos* and posthumous adoptions.

and nonadopted children. Under Pericles' citizenship law, the main objective of presentation to the phratry was to confirm that the child's parents were both Athenian citizens. Only then would the phratriarch inscribe his or her name in the list of members (Isae. 7.15). Once the adoptee had been introduced to and accepted by his father's phratry, he would be enrolled on the deme's civic register if he had already reached the age of eighteen. If not, he had to wait until he had reached the required age for admission (Isae. 7; Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 41.1; cf. Lambert 1993: 41, n. 71). An adopted son could not himself adopt or make a will if he had not produced any legitimate offspring (Demosth. 46.15).

If an adoptive father had a daughter, he usually married his adopted son to her (Lysias 32; Demosth. 41.3; Isae. 2.50, 3.42) to continue the *oikos* through her children. However, should the adoptive son not produce any children himself, he was not allowed to adopt; upon his death the estate inevitably went back to his adoptive father's line ([Demosth.] 44.64, 68). If the adoptive father happened to have a son born to him after having adopted, the adoptive son inherited equally with the natural son (Isoc. 6.63); that is, he received double the share that an adoptive son would have inherited in Gortyn. Also, adoption of females did occur (*thygatropoia*), although less often since they could not take over the role as heir to the household (Isae. 7.9, 11.8–9, 11.41).⁷ Unlike adoption practice in the ancient Near East, women themselves could not adopt. If it could be proven that the adopter had acted under the influence of a woman, such as his wife who had convinced him to adopt a son from her kin group, the adoption became invalid ([Dem.] 46.14; Isae. 2.1; cf. Harrison 1968: 87; MacDowell 1978: 101; Watson 1995: 61).

From the number of cases known, adoption by will or posthumously seems to have been more common than adoption *inter vivos*. The advantage of adoption by will was that if the bequeather did have a natural son shortly before his death, the latter became his heir (cf. Ghiggia 1999: chap. 6). Adoption by will thus became effective only if the testator died with no living sons (e.g., Isae. 1, 3, 4, 5, 9).

In the case of posthumous adoption (Isae. 6, 8, 10, 11; [Demosth.] 43, 44), it was often a posthumously born grandson who was adopted. If a man died without male heirs but with a daughter who could inherit but was not allowed to hold property in her own name (the so-called *epikleros*), her son, even if born after his grandfather's death, was adopted as his maternal grandfather's son and heir and received his maternal grandfather's name. The adopted son had to go, however, through the legal process of *epidikasia* (Isae. 6.3; cf. 5.6), before he could succeed to the adopter's estate.⁸ If a candidate was adopted posthumously, a relative of the late adopter took over the task of introducing the adoptee to his adoptive father's phratry (Lambert 1993: 177, no. 155).

⁷ Cf. Maffi 1992; Rubinstein 1991; Rubinstein 1993: 20–1; Ghiggia 1999; Rubinstein 1999.

⁸ Harrison 1968: 9–12; Todd 1993: 225; Patterson 1998: 100; Ghiggia 1999: chap. 7.

THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN EAST

For Hellenistic and mainland Greece, the epigraphic evidence is our main source for adoption practice. The material does not suggest any decline in the practice but rather that adoption continued uninterrupted from classical times (Rubinstein et al. 1991). Also, intermarriage between an adoptive son and natural daughter still seems to have been the ideal constellation if a natural son was lacking. In a grave inscription from Metella in Macedonia dated to 106 CE, Dioskourides, the adoptive son of Moukasos and natural son of Paibos, erected a grave monument for himself; his wife, Soura, daughter of Moukasos; their son; and their grandson (*SEG* 30.596). His wife was apparently the natural daughter of his adoptive father.

Adoptions in inscriptions are relatively well documented for Roman Asia Minor, in contrast to Roman Syria, Palestine, Arabia, or Egypt, where we have in general fewer inscriptions. More than half of our epigraphically recorded cases of adoption in Asia Minor come from the island of Rhodes (Poma 1972: 169–305; Rice 1988; Stavrianopoulou 1993: 177–88). This should not be interpreted to mean that adoption on Rhodes was more common than elsewhere in Asia Minor or the Hellenistic world, simply that on Rhodes a cultural habit to note adoptions and use adoptive formulae in inscriptions prevailed. Since it was customary in Rhodes to give the name of both the natural father and the adoptive father, it is possible to recognize that an adoption had taken place. Apart from the impressive evidence from Rhodes, we have a considerable number of cases also from other islands and mainland Asia Minor.

In contrast to the Latin West where we have a fixed formulary for the adoptive name, terminology seems to have been more fluid in the Greek East (for a detailed discussion see Wentzel 1930; Smith 1967). The adoptive father's name can go first or second, after the natural father's name. The natural father's name can be omitted entirely. And we find many different expressions for designating adoption in the Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor: *kath' huiiothesian* or *kata poiesin*, meaning "after/by adoption," is the most common expression, but *thesei de*, the formula regularly used in our papyrological sources from Roman Egypt, also occurs a few times. The adoption of females was noted as *kata thygathropoian* (after adoption as a daughter). As designation for the natural filiation, *physei* and its variants such as *kata physin* are common in the inscriptions from Asia Minor. Another way of expressing the natural origin was *gono de*, a formula, however, typical for Attica and Sparta, not Asia Minor. Typical for Rhodes is *kata genesin*. The expression *ho ek*, especially then when we are given two patronymics (e.g., *Theogenes Theramenou ho ek Apollonidou*), probably had the same meaning. But we find many more variations in the inscriptions differing from region to region. *Thetos* or *huiiothetos* is the expression for the adoptee.

In Roman Asia Minor we also find the custom of marrying the adopted son to the natural daughter. In an inscription from imperial Lydai in Lycia, Menodora, daughter of Apollonides, erected an honorific monument for her deceased husband Theougenes, son of Theramenos and the adoptive son of Apollonides. It seems that her father had adopted

her husband (*TAM* 2.1.148). We have another tomb inscription, a Christian epitaph from early fourth-century Phrygia, for a certain Aurelios Trophimos (*SEG* 6.137). Trophimos had only two daughters and thus had apparently adopted a son. Ammia and his adopted son-in-law Telesphoros erected a monument for him. At the end of the memorial inscription, the late father Trophimos confirms his wish for succession, a wish that was firmly embedded in the classical Greek tradition of inheritance strategy: "My monument was erected by my daughter Ammia, and my adopted son Telesphoros to whom I left my daughter Ammia for lawful wife." Even though *alokhon* (wife) in this inscription is restored, the restoration is secured by a subsequent epitaph inscribed on the same stone, in which Telesphoros and his wife Ammia mourn their little daughter (*SEG* 6.139). In addition, in a metrical inscription from fourth-century Lycaonia, a son-in-law, one Aphthonios, describes his father-in-law Valerianos, for whom he dedicated the grave monument, as *tokeus* (*MAMA* 1.232). His father-in-law was therefore probably also his adoptive father, Aphthonios *gambros* and *thetos*. In another case from third-century Roman Galatia, a certain Attalos erected together with his adoptive mother a tomb for his adoptive father, Demetrios (*RECAM* 2.303; cf. Fraser 1906: 149; Calder 1930: 373). On it he provided an inscription for Demetrios that stated among other things that he, Attalos, was both Demetrios' adopted son and his son in-law (*huios thetos kai gambros*). Attalos, moreover, bore the patronymic of his adoptive father, *Attalos Demetriou*. Calder believes that the adoption of a son-in-law documented in this inscription reveals an "old Anatolian custom" (Calder 1930), but it seems more likely that we are dealing with a marriage and inheritance pattern that was widely practiced throughout the entire Eastern Mediterranean. The so-called *threptoi* found in many inscriptions from Asia Minor, however, have been interpreted as household servants, if not slaves, rather than foster children.⁹ Even if most of these children were foundlings, some were apparently ceded or sold to the foster parents by their parents themselves (e.g., *SEG* 33.1082). Nonetheless, these *threptoi* seem to have shared a close emotional attachment with their foster parents who had often raised them since early childhood. They were, however, only rarely formally adopted as children and heirs but remained in a servile position.

Paul uses the term *huiiothesia* (ὑιοθεσία: Galatians 4:5; Romans 8:15, 23, 9:4; Ephesians 1:5), the most common term for "adoption as son" in the Hellenistic world, for the relationship between God and the gentile Christians. The choice of the term "adoption" stresses the free grace by which they were taken in by God, regardless of whether the status of the adopted children referred to the Roman or Greek practice of adoption (for the literary use of adoption see Scott 1992: 61). Paul's frequent use of this analogy shows that the concept of adoption was well-known in the Greek East. Through adoption they were "no longer slaves, but children" (Galatians 4:7), reminding us of the foundlings known from the papyri, taken in and either raised as slaves or natural children in Roman Egyptian households. The gentile Christians as God's adopted children are assimilated

⁹ Cameron 1939; Nani 1943–1944; Raffeiner 1977: 43, 90–2; Sacco 1980; Alföldi 1984: 118–20; Guinea 1998; Riel 2009. On *threptoi* see also Evans Grubbs in this volume.

to natural ones. They are called “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17; cf. Galatians 4:7), a concept that conforms with adoption practice laid out in the Roman Egyptian adoption contracts discussed below (pp. 521–3).

The “Teaching of the Apostles” (*Didascalia Apostolorum*), a treatise attributed to the Twelve Apostles but most probably composed in Northern Syria in the first half of the third century, also mentions adoption praxis. The *Didascalia* advised: “When any Christian becomes an orphan, whether it be a boy or girl, it is good that some one of the brethren who is without a child should take the boy, and esteem him in the place of a son; and he who has a son about the same age who has reached the age of marriage, should marry the girl to him. For they which do so perform a great work, and become fathers to the orphans, and shall receive the reward of this charity from the Lord God.”¹⁰ Orphaned boys should be adopted by families that had no male offspring; orphaned girls, however, were to be adopted by families who had a son near in age. The natural son should later marry the adoptive daughter, who as an undowered girl would have had difficulties in finding a husband. Unlike our cases from fourth-century BCE Athens, the *Didascalia* had the orphan’s welfare in mind rather than the interests of the adoptive parents. It suggests that this custom of marrying an adoptive child to a natural one was also known in Roman Syria and was not a specific Christian innovation but a centuries-old tradition in the Eastern Mediterranean, reinvented in a Christian setting. Here it was especially the adoptive daughter who was destined to marry a natural son.

According to Roman law and probably custom in the Western Mediterranean, marriages between an adopted daughter and a natural son or marriage between an adopted son and a natural daughter were considered incestuous. Roman law considered adoptive relationships—as long as they endured—as equivalent to blood relationships. Marriage between an adopted child and a natural one was thus possible only if the natural child was emancipated (*Dig.* 23.2.17 [Gaius 11 *ad ed. provinc.*]; cf. *Dig.* 23.2.55 [Gaius 11 *ad ed. prov.*]). The same procedure for adoption *cum* marriage was later obligatory in Byzantium (Just., *Inst.* 1.10.2; 1.19.2).¹¹ In late antiquity, with the importance of *patria potestas* loosening, the rights of women regarding adoption were extended. Women who wanted to adopt could seek the special permission of the emperor.¹² From the late third century CE, even Roman law concedes a sort of “second-class” adoption to women: women who adopted a child did not obtain *potestas* over it because they did not even have their natural children *in potestate*, but by adoption the adoptive child acquired the same rights to inherit from his adoptive mother as natural children had. Diocletian assured a certain Syra, who wanted to adopt her stepson, that the adoptive child gained the same rights “as if he was borne from you.”¹³

¹⁰ *Apost. Const.* 4.1 (= *Didasc. Apost.* 17); ed. B. M. Metzger, 1985–7.

¹¹ For adoption in Byzantine times see Montevicchi 1936: 18; Kurylowicz 1984; Macrides 1990; Beaucamp 1990: 48–52; Macrides 1999: 309.

¹² *Dig.* 5.2.29.3 (Ulpian); *CJ* 7.33.8 (294 CE); *CJ* 8.47.5 (291 CE); Just., *Inst.* 1.11.10. See also Euseb., *H.E.* 6.2.13; Lact., *De mort. pers.* 50.2. See Beaucamp 1990: 48–52; Beaucamp 1992: 167–71, 327; Arjava 1996: 88.

¹³ *CJust* 8.47.5 (291). Cf. also Just., *Inst.* 1.11.10; *Dig.* 5.2.29.3 (Ulpian); Krause 1994/5: III, 83.

PHARAONIC AND GRECO-ROMAN EGYPT

The so-called Adoption Papyrus from the New Kingdom period published by Gardiner in 1940 (*P. Ashmolean Museum* 1945.96) has elicited a great deal of discussion because it offers us an enormous amount of information not only about adoption procedure in ancient Egypt but also about the status and rights of women, family solidarity, marriage strategies, inheritance and succession, and the administration of property rights.¹⁴ Eyre (1992) argued that the motivation behind the text was to ensure the material security and social position of a childless woman. She discussed this family strategy in the context of norms of social behavior in the Near East and in particular through comparison with Aramaic documents from Elephantine and with early modern village life in Egypt. The text consists of two parts. In the first part a woman, Rennefer, is adopted by her husband, Nebnefer. The couple does not have any children. Nebnefer made his wife heir of all their matrimonial property excluding other blood relatives. The text goes on to recount that the couple jointly bought a slave girl who had three children; the father is not given. Seventeen years later, the couple freed the three slave children whom they brought up like their own, and Rennefer subsequently adopts them as heirs. She also adopts her younger brother and then marries the eldest girl of the three slave children to him. She expressly states that her brother should live now in her household and take care of her in her widowhood and that the former slave children “are not with him as slaves any longer; they are with him as younger siblings” (p. 208). The slave children were most probably the natural children of the husband and Rennefer’s stepchildren. The couple bought the slave girl jointly, presumably explicitly for this purpose when they realized that Rennefer was barren so that she could become their surrogate mother and have Nebnefer’s children (Gardiner 1941: 28; Allam 1974: 264–5; Eyre 1992: 210–1). We find provisions for similar cases given in the Code of Hammurabi (§141–9).

For the following centuries up to later Roman times we have next to no information about adoption practice in Egypt (for children in general in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt see the chapters by Parca and Pudsey in this volume). We just have the occasional source pointing to adoption.¹⁵ We find several remarks in diverse documents about persons, men and women, who were adopted, but the adoptive status is mentioned only as part of the adoptee’s name.¹⁶

In the Ptolemaic period, we find the Greek word *teknothesia* as the expression for adoption.¹⁷ In the Roman period adoption is called *thesis*; the usual adoptive formula

¹⁴ For a discussion see Seidl 1968: 54, 80; Allam 1974: 277–95; Eyre 1992. See further Huebner 2013: 176–96.

¹⁵ For adoption in the papyri see Mitteis 1906: 179; Meyer 1920: 22; Taubenschlag 1955: 261–321; Kurylowicz 1983; Beaucamp 1992: 48–52; Krause 1994–1995: III, 80–1; Legras 2006: 175–88.

¹⁶ Kurylowicz observes that the terms for adoption derived from *tithesthai* occur in private documents (*P.Oxy.* 1266 [98 CE]; *PSI* 732 [153/4 CE]; *P.Erl.* 82.6 [second century CE]; *P.Oxy.* 3593.6 [238–44 CE]), while terms for adoption derived from *poiesthai* appear in official legal documents (*Gnom. Id.* §41; *P.DuraEuropos* 12). See following for more on the *Gnomon Idilogos*.

¹⁷ *P.Col.Zen.* 1.58; cf. Taubenschlag 1955: 100, n. 12.

in the papyri is *thesei* followed by the adoptive father's name in the genitive, which designates the adoptive relationship.¹⁸ Once we find *kata de teknothesian*.¹⁹ *Thetos* is used in a papyrus from the third century CE for the adoptive son (PSI 4.294). In an early eighth-century papyrus from Aphroditis Kome, the adoptive son is called *huiopoiotos* (P.Lond. 4.1422, l. 74).

We have just two documents attesting adoption for the Ptolemaic period. One of these texts, the so-called Agenda List of Zenon (248 BCE), speaks, though, of *sungraphai teknothesiōn*, apparently an archive of adoption contracts (P.Col. 3.58; for the convincing interpretation of *sungraphai* as contracts and not registers, see Legras 2006: 175–6). These contracts were apparently kept in a public archive in Ptolemaic Philadelphia (Arsinoite nome)—an indication that adoption cannot have been such a rare event—and the author of the “agenda list” wants to go and check them, together with the marriage contracts, to discover the identity and whereabouts of a certain person: “[See] the contracts of marriage and adoption. Who is the man and where is he?” (P.Col. 3.58).²⁰ The other Ptolemaic text, from 164 BCE, may refer to the adoption of a girl named Herakleia who had belonged to the temple in Memphis (P.Par. 24 [UPZ 1.3]; cf. Legras 2006: 177–81).

Most of the documents that contain an adoptive formula date to the second century CE. This should not surprise us too much, because it coincides with the general chronological distribution of the papyrological evidence. Males and females were adopted, although there seems to have been a strong preference for males.²¹ A Syrian papyrus from Dura Europos from the second quarter of the second century CE states that adopted children were equally entitled to inherit as natural children and before parents, siblings, and grandparents of the deceased (P.DuraEuropos 12). Romans in Roman Egypt seemed to have followed Roman law for adoption, if we can draw any conclusion from naming practice. From the late first century CE on, we find several Romans in Egypt using the Roman adoptive formula, such as Gaius Volusius Sabinianus, the (adoptive) son of Gaius Volusius.²²

¹⁸ P.Oxy. 10.1266 (98 CE), male; P.Oslo 3.114 (first to early second century CE), male; P.Oxy. 1.46 (100 CE), male; P.Heid. 4.329 (105/6 CE), male; P.Oxy. 3.492 (130 CE), male; PSI 7.732 (153/4 CE), male; P.Oxy. 8.1123 (159/9 CE), male; P.Mert. 1.18 (161 CE), male; P.Oxy. 3.502 (164 CE), male; P.Oxy.Hels. 36 (167 CE), male; SB 18.13176 (168 CE), male; SB 20.14395 (181 CE), male; P.Oxy. 14.1721 (187 CE), male; P.Oxy. 74.4990 (188–9 CE), male; P.Oxy. 66.4531 (196 CE), male; P.Fuad I Univ. App. II 321 (first–second century CE), male; P.Oxy. 3.504 (second century CE), female; P.Wash. Univ. 1.2 (second century CE), male; P.Oxy. 31.2583 (second century CE), male; SB 14.11337 (second half of the second century CE), male; P.Oxy. 14.1719 (204 CE), male; PSI 5.457 (269 CE), male; P.Strassb. 4 (550 CE), two sisters adopted by the same man. Cf. Kurylowicz 1983: 61. Six times we have (*kata de*) *huiithesia(n)*: P.Oslo 3.114 (first to early second century CE), male; P.Erl. 28 (first half of the second century CE), male; P.Oxy. 50.3593 (238 CE), male; P.Oxy. 9.1206 (335 CE), male; P.Lips. 1.28 (381 CE), female; P.Köln 7.321 (seventh or eighth century CE), male.

¹⁹ P.Oxy. 46.3271 (47–54 CE), male.

²⁰ For the *sungraphe*, the written contract that was taken over from Greek notary practice, cf. Rupprecht 2005: 330.

²¹ Adoption of females: P.Oxy. 1.46 (110 CE); P.Oxy. 1.492 (130 CE); P.Oxy. 1.502 (164 CE); P.Oxy. 504 (second century CE); P.Strassb. 4 (550 CE).

²² BGU 3.709 (138–161 CE). See Taubenschlag 1955: 101, n. 18 for further references.

As in fourth-century BCE Athens, it was important for citizens of metropolitan status and members of the gymnasium in Roman Egypt to adduce proof that their son was of Greek blood on both the paternal and maternal sides so that he could be registered as a member of this class. Therefore, as in Athens, the adoption of a foundling, if made official, could cause considerable problems. The *Gnomon of the Idiologos*, a legal instrument of Roman rule that served as a guideline for the administrative practice of the procurator in Egypt in the first centuries CE, declares that Greeks or Romans who adopted (and formally instituted as heir) a boy picked up from the dung heap (instead of raising him as a slave) were to lose upon their death one-fourth of their estate to the imperial fiscus.²³ Indirectly, this provision puts at a disadvantage the person who adopts a stranger, whose origin and free status is unknown, rather than a child from his own wider family circle. According to the *Gnomon*, only Egyptians were thus able to adopt a stranger without incurring any disadvantages, simply because no privileges were connected with their status. Even if in most cases people in a village society knew whose child it was that had been deposited on the dung heap, foundlings were usually not formally adopted but rather raised as slaves (Evans Grubbs 2010; see also Evans Grubbs in this volume).

ADOPTION CONTRACTS FROM LATER ROMAN EGYPT

While the Agenda List of Zenon from the early Ptolemaic period already speaks of a register of contracts of adoptions, the earliest actual adoption contract that survives dates to around six centuries later, and it is only from this and later evidence that we are able to gain more information on the procedure of adoption in Egypt. Yet this does not mean that adoptions necessarily occurred less frequently before this point. Not only with adoptions but also with other legal acts, we can notice an increasing importance paid to written documents from the fourth century CE on (Rupprecht 2005: 331, 335–6). Moreover, an adoption contract might have been desired only when a substantial property needed to be protected or an inheritance secured. So while the elite might have preferred a formal adoption, among the poor there was no need for a contract, and children were reared informally (cf. Boswell 1988: 223–4).

The earliest surviving adoption contract, from fourth-century Oxyrhynchus, states: “We, Heracles and his wife Isarion, on the one part agree that we have given away to you, Horion, for adoption our son Patermouthis, aged about two years, and I, Horion, on the other part, that I have him as my genuine son (*gnesion huion*), so that the rights proceeding from succession to my inheritance shall be maintained” (*P.Oxy.* 9.1206, 335

²³ *Gnomon* §41.107 (*BGU* 4.1210). Cf. Maroi 1925: 377–406; Kurylowicz 1983: 63.

CE, trans. Winter 1933: 58). Further down in this document the adopting father confirms that he will register the adoptee in the official records as his lawful, legitimate son. The biological parents lost all rights regarding their child who thus became the legal child of the adopting parent, who was responsible from then on for supplying all of his needs. The adoption was considered binding and permanent.

In another adoption contract from the Hermopolite nome dating to 381 CE, a sixty-year-old grandmother, Aurelia Teeus, gives her orphaned ten-year-old grandson for adoption to her son, the younger brother of the boy's late father. The uncle promises to raise the boy as if he was his own and to manage his considerable property, consisting of land and buildings and movable goods the boy had inherited from his parents, until the latter came of age. He gives the assurance that the adoptee held all the rights of a freeborn and firstborn son. It was unlikely that the adopter would ever have other children because the document states that he was a monk. Thus, the boy became the legitimate son and heir of the adopter "as if he were engendered by you from your own blood," as the grandmother says (*P.Lips.* 1.28; trans. Rowlandson 1998: 297–8). The adopting father declared his responsibility for "feeding and clothing the child in decent and appropriate fashion."

Our third contract records the adoption of a nine-year-old girl adopted by a couple in Oxyrhynchus in 554 CE (*P.Oxy.* 16.1895). The biological widowed mother, who gave her up because of poverty, assured the adopting couple that she handed her over from then on forever as the couple's legal daughter and that she had no right to take her away again. If she did so, she would have pay for the expenses the adoptive parents had incurred so far. The adopting couple took over the role and duties of genuine parents and agreed to care for her needs, fulfilling the position of parents.

Taubenschlag (1955: 261–321) and Kurylowicz (1983) believed that the practice of adoption in Roman Egypt was firmly based on Hellenistic law, and previously I followed their assumption (Huebner 2007). However, having done further cross-cultural studies on adoption and after a closer reading of the sources, I no longer believe that this assumption is supported by the evidence. Moreover, details given in the adoption contracts from later Roman Egypt ostentatiously contradict classical Greek laws on adoption. Adoptions in Egypt did not follow classical Athenian adoption practice where we hear only of the adoption of young men. In the contracts from late Roman Egypt, all adoptive children were minors: a two-year-old boy, a ten-year-old boy, and a nine-year old girl. Furthermore, even though all surviving adoption contracts date to after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 (when Roman citizenship was granted to almost all free people), they do not conform with Roman law concerning adoption. Adoption in Roman Egypt did not confer *patria potestas* on the adopter, and the adoption contracts stress the welfare of the child and focus on inheritance rights, not the benefits (such as care in old age and continuation of the family) the adopter would gain from adopting. In sum, the parenting aspect of adoption and the assimilation of natural family ties are dominant features.

Moreover, whereas in classical Greece women could not adopt (Isae. 7; cf. Harrison 1968: 94) and classical Roman law also forbade it, in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt the status of women was significantly higher. Females in Roman Egypt seem to have adopted

children—alone and jointly with their husbands, regardless of whether this was legally recognized. In one case, a woman adopted the two sons of her husband and made them heirs of her property (*P.Sijpesteijn* 43 from 119/20 CE [*P.Oxy.* 3.583 descr.]). Moreover, a woman was also in the position to give up a child for adoption, unheard of in classical Greek or Roman law. In all three surviving adoption contracts it is a woman who is giving up a child for adoption—in two cases alone (*P.Lips.* 1.28; *P.Oxy.* 16.1895), in one case jointly with her husband (*P.Oxy.* 9.1206). The assimilation within the family of adopted children in terms of nomenclature extended not only to the father but also to the latter's wife as *thesei meter* (adoptive mother; *P.Oxy.* 2.504) and his natural children as “brother” and “sister” (*SB* 7871; cf. Kurylowicz 1983: 63). Adoption in Roman Egypt was clearly based on *Volksrecht* (the people's law) and indigenous custom rather than on Greek or Roman law. Instead, we find many similarities with adoption practice in ancient Near Eastern or Pharaonic times where minors were also adopted and women were involved in adopting a child or ceding it to the adopting party.

ADOPTION AND THE CENSUS RETURNS

It is peculiar that none of the approximately 1,500 individuals recorded in the Roman Egyptian census returns currently known, which date from the early first century to the middle of the third century, declares that she or he had been adopted (Bagnall and Frier 1994, 2006; Bagnall, Frier, and Rutherford 1997). We should be almost certain that some of them were indeed the adoptive children of their parents: in a previous study I already noted that far too many fathers had a living son when they reached old age, a percentage highly unlikely from a demographic point of view (cf. Huebner 2007). Furthermore, some age differences between parents and their children are suspicious. There is, for instance, the woman who gave birth at age nine (and therefore must have become pregnant at age eight) before the likely onset of puberty (Bagnall and Frier 2006: 131-Pr-1). We also have two mothers who apparently gave birth at age forty-nine (*ibid.*: 159-Hm-3 and 173-Pr-5) and another who was fifty-one at the birth of her daughter (*ibid.*: 187-Hm-1).²⁴ While in general reported ages and attested ages at childbirth appear to be credible, Bagnall and Frier dismiss these ages as suspicious. Moreover, we have a man who had a son thirteen years his junior, which meant he must have sired him at age twelve (*ibid.*: 187-Ar-4), and fathers whose sons were their juniors by seventeen years (*ibid.*: 131-He-4) and eighteen years (*ibid.*: 117-Ar-2; 173-Pr-15). Bagnall and Frier did not consider the option that these children were adopted. Adoption would, however, be an obvious explanation.

Further study of the census returns also reveals that far too few orphans are recorded. According to life tables, the likelihood was that one in three children lost his or her father

²⁴ The numbering for the census returns follows that of Bagnall and Frier 2006. For children in the census returns of Roman Egypt, see also Pudsey's chapter in this volume.

during the first fifteen years of their life (Huebner and Ratzan 2009: 9). But only around 16% of all freeborn children age fifteen or below recorded in the census returns were living without a father. This number is even lower if we look just at the boys: only 14% were not living in the same household as their father. It may be that children enjoyed their mothers for a few years longer because the age difference between mothers and their children was around five to ten years lower than between them and their fathers. Even then, according to life tables, at least one-fourth of all children had lost their mother by age fifteen. In the census returns, however, fewer than 13% of all children were living without their mother. Finally, according to model life tables, around 11% of all children would be complete orphans when reaching age fifteen. In the census returns, however, fewer than 7% of recorded children at age fifteen or younger were without both parents. Again, looking only at the boys, this number was even lower: just 4% of all recorded boys were apparently complete orphans. We have to remember here that the census returns record only those parent–child relationships in the same household. Also, divorce or migration could have been the reason that a child did not live with his parents in the same household. Fathers were more likely to be absent for work reasons, while mothers often left their children behind in their paternal home in the case of divorce. Numbers for apparent half and complete orphans should thus be even considerably higher than in the model life tables.

The explanation for these discrepancies between model life tables and the census returns lies most probably in the fact that adoptive status was not recorded in the census. It seems likely that Roman Egyptian children who lost their parents to death found foster or adoptive parents (boys seem to have been luckier than girls) and were registered in the census as their natural children. They were adopted by an uncle who might have already been living in the same household or by the new spouse of the surviving parent. Adoption by a stepparent is a common feature in many ancient societies: we hear of several cases from ancient Near Eastern Nippur where not only stepfathers but also stepmothers are recorded adopting the children of their new spouse, often upon marriage, to assimilate marital ties to natural family ones and to secure support in old age. In classical Athens the orator Isocrates married a widowed mother of three sons and adopted the youngest of his stepsons, Aphareus, because he had no child of his own.²⁵ In 291, as already mentioned, a certain Syra was granted the exceptional right to adopt her stepson by Diocletian because she had lost her own sons.²⁶ Adoption of stepchildren also occurred in Roman Egypt: Chentmouphis, whose record we have in two consecutive census returns from 131 and 145 CE, registered in both returns the daughter of his wife from a previous union as his daughter and as the full sister of the son they later had together (Bagnall and Frier 2006: 131-Pr-1, 145-Pr-1). We know that she was not his natural daughter only from a cover letter dated to 161 CE that accompanied these two copies of the census returns. From this letter we learn that the girl was only the half-sister of

²⁵ [Plut.] *Mor.* 838a, 839b; cf. Isae. 8.40–2; cf. Corbier 1991: 72–3; Rubinstein 1993: 87, 96, 101; Watson 1995: 39–42; Cox 1998: 90; Patterson 1998: 199.

²⁶ *CJust* 8.47.5 (291). Cf. Lindsay 2009: 72.

her brother on the mother's side and that her father was unknown (cf. Huebner 2007: 38 Rowlandson and Takahasi 2009: 104). Also, women adopted the children of their husbands. In second-century CE Oxyrhynchus, a childless woman adopted the two sons of her husband from a previous marriage and made them heirs to her property.²⁷ However, in contrast to all other societies previously discussed, we do not find any direct evidence for the practice of adoption and subsequent marriage of the adoptive child to a natural one in our sources for Roman Egypt.²⁸

It seems that, as far as was possible, the status of adopted children was assimilated to that of legitimate children and that no distinction was made in subsequent official documents. This assumption is also supported by our surviving adoption contracts, which stress that the adoptive child would be raised and treated like a natural child, with an equivalent legal status. Furthermore, the child was inscribed in the official registers as the rightful child and heir of the adopter. Biological origins mattered very little afterward.

CONCLUSION

In general, we find the same reasons for adoption all over the ancient Eastern Mediterranean. The most common seems to have been (1) to provide a childless man or couple with an heir, (2) to provide a destitute or orphaned child with a home and family, (3) to secure support in old age and provision with a proper burial, and (4) to perpetuate the household and the cult of the ancestors. But in contrast to the Roman West and classical Athens, fathers in the ancient Near East also adopted when they already had their own sons. And while in Rome and Athens the adoptee was usually a young man, in the societies of the Eastern Mediterranean predominantly infants and young children seem to have been adopted. And not all adoptees were males; girls were also candidates for adoption, even if the adoption of males seems to have been far more common in all societies under consideration. Reasons to adopt a girl were most probably (5) to foster alliances with another family or (6) to provide a destitute and undowered girl with a home and, if available, with a husband in the person of her adoptive brother.

In general, the aim of adoption in all the societies in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean under consideration here was to give the adoptive child a status that resembled that of a natural child as closely as possible. While women had been able to adopt according

²⁷ *P.Oxy.* 3.583 descr. (119/20 CE) = *P.Sijpesteijn* 43 (2007). See Kreller 1919: 176, 247, 266; Taubenschlag 1959: 264.

²⁸ My suggestion that apparent brother-sister marriages were in fact marriages between a natural and an adoptive child (Huebner 2007) has found vehement but unfounded criticism (Remijsen and Clarysse 2008; Rowlandson and Takahasi 2009), and I respond in detail to the arguments brought forward in my monograph on the family in Roman Egypt (Huebner 2013).

to indigenous Egyptian and Near Eastern tradition, they could not do so according to classical Greek or Roman law. Women could foster a child but could not secure equal, natural mother–child ties by a legal procedure. Women, however, did adopt, mainly, it seems, to make up for the lack of their own children and to establish rights of inheritance, although this was not recognized as a valid act before the later Roman period when adoption by women was recognized by Roman jurists, apparently as a concession to local practices in the Eastern provinces.

If a couple had no son but had a daughter, they had the option to adopt their son-in-law to continue the family line through their daughter's children. Thus, instead of watching their daughter leave their house on her wedding day, the young couple would live with them and they won a male heir who would care for them, continue his adoptive father's business, provide his adoptive parents with a proper burial, and perform the customary rites at their grave. Moreover, marrying the daughter inside the family meant the dowry also remained in the family. Finally, whereas marrying one's daughter outside the home meant that her children would belong to her husband's family, not to her father's, through the children of the natural daughter and adopted son-in-law the agnatic line would be continued and the threat of family extinction would recede. While according to Roman tradition marriage between adopted and natural children was forbidden, it was a desired outcome of adoption in societies all over the Eastern Mediterranean. The sparse evidence for adoption in Greco-Roman Egypt is no proof that adoptions took place only rarely. On the contrary, more indirect evidence points to the fact that adoptions were at least as common in Greco-Roman Egypt as elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean.

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CHAPTER 26

PICTORIAL *PAIDEIA*: CHILDREN IN THE SYNAGOGUE

HAGITH SIVAN

INTRODUCTION

If there are no small children, there will be no disciples;
If there are no disciples, there will be no sages;
If there are no sages, there will be no Torah;
If there is no Torah, there will be no synagogues and academies;
If there are no synagogues and academies, the Holy One will no longer
allow his
Presence to dwell in this world.

(Leviticus Rabbah 11:7)

WHEN the Temple stood in Jerusalem, Jewish children were initiated into Temple cult and ideology during one of the annual pilgrimage festivities.¹ When the Temple was destroyed (in 70 CE) rabbinic imagination reconstructed a verbal Temple, down to the most minute architectural detail, sacrifices and services included. Modern scholarship, following the ancient rabbis' own representation, granted the Mishnah (redacted ca. 200 CE) the status of the definite textual endeavor of biblical exegesis. The Mishnah, and its own exegesis, the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds (redacted ca. 400 and 600 CE, respectively), became the measuring rods of Jewish identity.² The rabbinic revolution reinstated the Temple as the mother of

¹ The article is one component of my forthcoming book on Jewish childhood in antiquity. I am very grateful to Dr. Ephrat Habas Rubin, who read a draft of this paper and offered insightful criticism. I had the opportunity to share my ideas with Israeli archeologists, experts of Galilean archeology, at a workshop organized by Yaakov Ashkenazi and Mordechai Aviam. I am grateful to Yaki, Moti, Hayim Ben David, and all the participants who offered comments and criticism. The opinions here expressed are mine alone.

² The abbreviations used here are: M = Mishna; T = Tosefta; BT = Babylonian Talmud; PT = Palestinian Talmud; ARN = Avot de Rabbi Nathan. For an expanded list of standard abbreviations see *The Cambridge History of Judaism* or search online via Google under "Abbreviations for EBR" or "Abbreviations for use in TC articles."

Judaism, promoting a textual economy that aspired to dispense with visuals. This is a pure textual lineage. It proved an insufficiently hermeneutical perspective. I consider the history of Jewish education as a story told by both texts and images. Paradigmatic children, lifted out of the biblical text and placed on artful walls or floors of synagogues, promoted a *paideia* that bred real citizens of Judaism. I do not mean that pictures supplanted texts but rather that as visual reworking of biblical tales they supplemented the lessons derived from Scripture.

A book (the Bible), a congregation, and an assembly house (the synagogue) provide a primary scheme that frames Jewish childhood in antiquity. Each is governed by an ancient history of its own. Together they account for the social experience and acculturation of children into a society governed by communal prayers, festivities, synagogal gatherings, and rules harking back to Scripture. In what follows I explore the role of engraved words and images in constructing identities for Jewish children in the Roman world. I am specifically asking how the visuals suddenly seen on walls and floors of synagogues in late antiquity coalesced to inculcate and perpetuate traditions that groomed children as Jews.

I focus on six late ancient synagogues, two in the Diaspora and four in the Land of Israel (= Roman Palestine) from ca. 200 to ca. 600 CE. My point of departure is a text, a dedicatory inscription from Macedonian Stobi, that marked the transformation of domestic space into a sanctuary with inherited privileges. How did this form of deprivatization shape the lives of the children in the household? I then shift to the frontier town of Dura Europos on the Euphrates where members of this remote congregation were presented (ca. 250 CE) with a remarkable variety of biblical images painted on the walls of their synagogue, likewise a converted room. At the Durene synagogue I examine the message of the scenes featuring children as saviors or as the saved. I conclude with floor mosaics of four Galilean synagogues (Khirbet Hamam, Meroth, Beth Alpha, Sepphoris), each featuring biblical scenes. What kind of novel educational ideology did this radical departure from past decorative traditions herald? As centers of sociability, these synagogues played a role that was far from trivial in determining Jewish identity from infancy via adolescence to adulthood.

SYNAGOGUE AS HOME AND HOME AS SYNAGOGUE

A solitary marble column, once gracing a synagogue and later found in a church built into the Jewish sanctuary, is the sole testimony left of the substitution:

... Cl[audius] Tiberius Polycharmos,
also (named) Achyrios ("flaxen hair" or "the unexpectedly fortunate"),
father (*pater*) of the synagogue at Stobi,
having throughout led a life of a citizen
according to (the precepts of) Judaism,
(*hos poleiteusamenos pasan poleiteian kata ton Ioudaismon*)
[has donated], in fulfillment of a vow the[se] rooms (?)

to the holy place (*hagios topos*)...
 Ownership and disposition of all the upper chambers is to be retained by me,
 Claudius Tiberius Polycharmos,
 And by my heirs all our lives...³

The donor, who bore Greek and Latin names, styled himself “father of the synagogue,” as though paternity defined his relationship to the sacred space he dedicated to communal worship. With terms directly borrowed from the civic language employed by Greeks, Polycharmos publicly proclaimed his allegiance to the norms of Judaism. These, as articulated by Philo of Alexandria, a fellow Diaspora Jew of an earlier era (first century CE), were based on key practices of circumcision, Sabbath, festivals, dietary laws, and endogamic marriage.⁴ Philo further advocated oral learning to establish links between sacred text, sacred space, and the community. The process was most fruitfully established during synagogue services (at least in Alexandria) where experts taught and preached the Law to audiences of fathers and sons.⁵

At Stobi, the dedicatory inscription would have been visible to all those who frequented Polycharmos’ synagogue, which consisted of a converted space in a building he owned, possibly his own domicile. The location ensured that the lessons and liturgy associated with synagogues became integral components of the family’s spiritual daily diet. Polycharmos’ heirs (*kleronomoi*), whose property rights to the domestic synagogue were recorded in the inscription, grew up in a tradition that combined adherence to basic Jewish precepts on one hand and to a widely practiced tradition of civic euergetism on the other. Unnamed, these heirs, possibly his sons and his daughters, were in all likelihood quite young, at least young enough for their father to incur the expense of an engraving to commemorate their privileges beyond his own lifetime. As children of a notable figure in the community, they would have borne honorific titles commonly reserved for communal office holders and benefactors. Jewish children at Rome, for example, even as young as seven and twelve, bore the title of a *grammateus* (secretary), and some were designated archons and archisynagogues at age three.⁶ Such titles denoted not an actual office but the child’s elevated status (or rather that of his family) as well as the child’s potential role in the community. One visual expression of the youngster’s status would have been reflected in the order of sitting in the synagogue. Polycharmos’ male heirs and their youthful Italian counterparts probably occupied from infancy prominent seats next to their father, close to the Torah ark.

Jewish children in Macedonia assumed, like their elders, a triple identity, Roman, Jewish, and local (Stobean). They were citizens of empire, city, and their own

³ Noy et al. 2004 (*IJO I*), section 5: 55–71. Dates proposed are 163 and 279 CE.

⁴ Mendelson 1988. On his ideals of broadly based education see Mendelson 1982. It is impossible to gauge to what extent such ideas permeated other Diaspora communities or even the entire Jewish Alexandrian community.

⁵ Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.12–4. Cf. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.178.

⁶ Williams 1998, VI.26–30 (Italy), with a majority (four out of five) from Rome, all roughly dating to the third-fourth centuries.

community, as though living in a charted land with endless configurations that enabled one to slide imperceptibly from one discourse to another. It was a symbiosis that prevailed throughout the Roman Mediterranean. But the Jews of the Diaspora also instilled in the young an additional line of parentage by positing a link with the Jewish homeland. Polycharmos challenged anyone who would dare to defy his wishes by imposing an enormous monetary penalty to be paid to the Patriarch in Palestine. The long shadow of that venerable figure acted as a guarantor of the local nabob's plans and privileges. Whether the Patriarch himself was informed remains unclear.

The inscribed words at Stobi's synagogue recorded an identifiable procedure that projected close association of paternal pedigree, sanctified places, and the biblical homeland.⁷ Over all loomed the sacred text, the Jewish Bible, which provided the foundation of a universal Jewish identity. Polycharmos does not refer to the Bible or cite a biblical verse. But the space he created for his heirs and his fellow Jews could not function without the Torah and Torah's audience. In synagogal learning halls, biblically based lessons, translations, and liturgy transformed biblical unreality into contemporary contexts.⁸ Children, too, were encouraged to read the Torah in synagogues and apparently even to engage in translation.⁹ Anyone who could recite three times Psalm 145 was certain to become "son of the world to come" (*ben ha-olam ha-ba*, BT Ber 4b). When arranged alphabetically, as Psalms 145 and 119 were, it should have been a simple enough feat even for young learners to achieve, although the latter is eight times longer. In a sanctified space, like Polycharmos' synagogue, such reading, most likely an oral recitation, would have constituted a demonstration of affinity with both congregation and Scripture.

THE DURA EUROPOS SYNAGOGUE: THE CHILDREN REGISTER AND VISUAL LITERACY

Biblical tales and regulations, products of a distant past, simultaneously posed an intrinsic distance between lines and listeners. To resolve the ongoing pedagogical problem of bridging myth and contemporary function of the Torah as promoter of Judaism's literacy and identity, a visual novelty was introduced.¹⁰ In late antiquity biblical scenes

⁷ Cf. the numerous donations recorded in Roman Syria: Roth-Gerson 2001; and the various inscriptions collected in Noy et al. 2004 (*IJO*). Useful parallels can be also drawn with the Jewish communities in Sardis, Ephesus, and Aphrodisias in Asia Minor.

⁸ Although the nature and extent of school literacy have yet to be determined. Here the question of languages is also crucial—were children taught only to read or also to write, and if so in what languages? See Hezser 2001: 72–3; Fraade 2011.

⁹ M Megilla 4.6.

¹⁰ The question of how this problem had been treated before is addressed in my book on Jewish childhood in antiquity (see n. 1).

sprouted on walls and floors of synagogues, complete with select biblical protagonists and stories. The earliest dated “revolution” of this sort is linked with the Jewish community of Dura-Europos.

At the edge of the Roman world in the frontier zone between Rome and Persia, on the caravan route that linked the Mediterranean via Palmyra to Persia, Jews gathered in a house that, like the Stobaean synagogue, had once been a private residence. In this bustling border town of some antiquity (Dura-Europos had been founded on the bank of the Euphrates by veterans of Alexander’s army around 300 BCE) acts of Jewish euergetism were recorded in Greek, Aramaic, and Persian on decorated ceiling tiles.¹¹ In 245 CE the communal prayer hall was remodeled. The result was a stunning array of paintings inspired by biblical stories.¹² In this last phase, a mere decade before Dura fell to the Sassanids and was abandoned (256 CE), the images that crowded all four walls of the synagogue publicly defied the Second Commandment. The scenes selected for design and display were based not only on Pentateuchal narratives but also on stories derived from other biblical books including Samuel, Kings, Ezekiel, and Esther. It would appear that those who orchestrated donations and paid for the representations projected a common area where the public, children and adults, were to experience the interplay of verbal and pictorial techniques of biblical interpretation.

Drawn in vivid colors, the paintings postulate precise points of myths of origins. They convert words into images and provide a perfect accompaniment of synagogal sounds and smells. To judge by the endless, and thus far fruitless, modern search for a single key to unlock the alleged homology of Dura’s biblical cycle, it may be useful to begin with a simple acknowledgment of their originality.¹³ My own analysis is based on a seeming paradox: while recognizing the biblical text as crucial witness to a contemporary reality that functioned as a basis of truth for the fable, the painted scenes simultaneously aspired to instill distance between the Bible and its mythic settings. Because of the overwhelming significance of texts and of oral verbal tradition in ancient Judaism, the addition of visual stimuli to the repertory of learning devices appropriated a reserve of imagination, a store that children could dip into freely.¹⁴

¹¹ Daryaei 2010: 29–37. Apparently these visitors especially liked the Esther panel. See also Fine 2011. Cf. Roth-Gerson 2001: 84–7 for Greek donor inscriptions, noting (85) the rarity of dedicatory inscriptions in two languages (Aramaic and Greek or Hebrew and Greek) outside Palestine, suggesting the influence of the Babylonian–Persian Jewish community. Some names are inscribed in middle Persian characters.

¹² They can be seen on the Internet, as can the other mosaics mentioned but not illustrated here due to constraints of space.

¹³ For bibliography see RAMBI: The Index of Articles on Jewish Studies. Available online: <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/rambi/>.

¹⁴ As far as I could see there are no references in the vast literature on synagogues and on synagogal pictorial decoration to the role of biblical images in shaping Jewish education in late antiquity (e.g., Horbury et al. 1999: 282–3, 295, for presentation of mosaics in purely decorative terms, as encoders of complex messages of salvation, and even as a platform for board games).

How, precisely, images were integrated into Jewish school curricula in late antiquity is difficult to gauge.¹⁵ In the vast corpus of texts associated with rabbis (Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud, midrash) there are no sustained discussions of either learning or teaching theories and practices or of visual stimuli.¹⁶ Assuming certain universality in matters pertaining to elementary education, the acquisition of rudimentary/functional literacy via letters, syllables, dictation, copying, and recitation would have been conducted through interaction between pupil and teacher as well as among pupils at various levels of learning.¹⁷ The latter is strikingly illustrated in a non-Jewish pictorial cycle that delineates universal experiences of early schooling.¹⁸

The protagonist, a child named Kimbros, begins his schooling career with the realization that learning involves not pleasures but pain. The first mosaic panel shows Kimbros being flogged by his tutor at home, possibly a slave member of the household assigned to instruct children (Figure 26.1). In the next schooling stage Kimbros is moved from home to the residence of a teacher. There he and other small children are introduced to their new mentor, a man named Alexandros, who is seen embracing his new charge (Figure 26.2). Alexandros is probably a *grammaticus*, a second-level teacher. The children are further socialized through forming friendships among themselves. Little Kimbros acquires a new friend under the auspices of Philia herself, the very personification of friendship. On another panel, the children, somewhat older, are seen congregating around the teacher whose lecture is delivered directly under the inspiration of Paideia (education) herself. Standing next to Alexandros' chair, Paideia, or rather her personification, draws words out of his mouth. Her invocation and close association with the teacher serve to bolster the latter's authority in class.

By far the most intriguing panel in the series is the mosaic illustrating the use of rhetorical exercises and play enactment (Figure 26.3). A process of petition, a ubiquitous feature of life under Roman rule, is introduced into the day's curriculum. The pupils engage in its reenactment, with the group divided into two pleading camps. The teacher acts as a judge. Kimbros' side "loses" the case. This seems to be the conclusion drawn from the scene in which the child is removed from class/courtroom, carried out in the

¹⁵ Nor is the question discussed in any standard reference to Jewish education in antiquity, e.g., Safrai 1968: 148–69; Drazin 1940.

¹⁶ Textual stimuli, by contrast, appear to have constituted the very core of the rabbinic discourse. For a useful modern guide, essentially a collection of rabbinic excerpts on children, teachers, and education, see Aberbach 1982.

¹⁷ For useful general comments see Horn and Martens 2009: 116. On scenes from school, probably in third century CE Gaul, see Dionisotti 1982; see also the chapters by Bloomer and Vuolanto in this volume.

¹⁸ Marinescu, Cox, and Wachter 2007. I am grateful to Constantine Marinescu for forwarding this article to me and for granting permission to reproduce several panels. The precise provenance of these mosaics is unknown but a Middle Eastern origin is more than likely. They are dated to either the fourth or the fifth century, largely on stylistic criteria. The identity of the child has not been established. The name is rare. It appears in second-century CE documents from the Judean Desert where it designates a Jewish man.



FIGURE 26.1 Kimbros the infant is flogged by his tutor. (Private collection. Rockville, MD. Courtesy: Constantin A. Marinescu. Photo: Stefan Hagen.)



FIGURE 26.2 Kimbros is introduced to his teacher who welcomes him into the school. (Private collection. Rockville, MD. Courtesy: Constantin A. Marinescu. Photo: Stefan Hagen.)

arms of two schoolmates, possibly his equally unsuccessful co-pleaders.¹⁹ Another panel depicts Kimbros succumbing to disease—he is shown lying in bed, most likely at home. Was this a result of the judgment scene at school? A happy end follows as Kimbros recovers and rejoins his friends and teacher at school.

It would be idle to speculate on the original setting of such a series or even whether they delineate imaginative or concrete protagonists. The mosaics, possibly placed in the schoolroom itself, highlight a simple and effective use of oral and visual stimuli. Designed to overcome monotonous repetition, these methods challenged the text, be it petitions presented by plaintiffs in real courts of law or Scripture in synagogues where the Torah text was the norm for study, meditation, and patterns of behavior.²⁰ That Jewish teachers employed similar pedagogical strategies may be gleaned from hermeneutic traditions, such as the exegesis attached to the books of the Pentateuch. For example, to drive home the meaning of Leviticus 25:36 (“let thy brother live with you”) where, it may be noted, the original text refers to leniency regarding loans, the following story was concocted:

[Two men] walked in the wilderness with water in their jug sufficient for only one of them. Should only the one drink so that he might reach a place of settlement? If both were to drink, then both would die. They decided it, or at least they based the answer to it on the Torah verse: “Let thy brother live with you.” (Sifra 6)

It can be easily imagined that children were assigned the roles of the two men as they debated the verse.

At the center of the western wall of the Durene synagogue, the Torah niche facing Jerusalem was embellished with a schematic drawing of three elements: a sanctuary, a symbol, and a story. Instantly recognizable were the Temple (of Solomon), the Temple's Menorah (candelabra), and the binding of Isaac (Akedah; Genesis 22). No effort was made at correct scaling or accuracy. It would have been a futile exercise of artistic geometry. By the mid-third century CE, the Temple had gone (destroyed in 70 CE), its huge Menorah disappeared, and the Akedah itself belonged to the fogs of the patriarchal mythic past.²¹ Nevertheless, etched in collective Jewish memory, this combination of biblical references also highlighted the staying power of the biblically centered discourse. Texts and their pictorial representation kept the community separate from the temporal frame of their city.

Simplicity and symbolism are striking. In Dura's Torah art, side by side with divinely sanctioned structure and holy implements, the boy Isaac remains an indistinct bundle atop a huge altar, a static model like an abstract idealization.²² Fresh from classes replete

¹⁹ See Marinescu et al. 2007 for a different interpretation.

²⁰ Safrai 1968: 155.

²¹ On texts inspiring hopes in the survival of Temple implements in hiding, see Weitzman 2005: 96–117.

²² Kessler 2000: 77, identifying the two small figures as Isaac rather than as Isaac and Sarah. The Torah niche and the colorful paintings on the wall are not contemporaneous, the former apparently preceding the latter. On the dates see Kraeling 1956: 39. See also Sivan 1978.

with patriarchal narratives, perhaps administered in the synagogal complex itself, Dura's Jewish children gazing at the Akedah picture atop the Torah ark became cognizant of the heroic legends in which founders of race and religion seem at first destined to die young. School lessons would have taught them to identify the locale of the sacrifice (Moriah, Genesis 22:2) with that of Mount Moriah where the Solomonic Temple was erected.²³ Read as a story of near death and rebirth, the drawings became an account of a double passage or transition: of protagonists into heroes; and of monuments into memorials. They also reinforced the bond forged in countless biblical tales between God on one hand and land (of Israel) and people (Jews) on the other, a covenant that even a Diaspora existence could not sever.

Dura's abbreviated version of Genesis 22 (the Akedah narrative) presents a stark contrast with both the wealth and the expert artistic hand evidently at work on the walls of the synagogue. Here I focus on a single register, the lower register of the western wall of the synagogue. Whoever selected its scenes clearly had the younger (and shorter) worshippers in mind. Well within the vision range of children, all the paintings of this register feature biblical tales with children protagonists.²⁴ Four foundational moments are depicted: the salvaging of baby Moses in the floating casket on the Nile by an all-women team (Exodus 2); the resuscitation of a widow's young son by Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 17; Elijah is labeled); the anointing of the adolescent David by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 16; the Aramaic label reads "Shmuel anointing David"); and the crowning of the youthful Esther as queen of Persia, perhaps at the moment of her triumph over the Jews' mortal enemy (Haman).

These were instructive stories. They delineated a specifically Jewish manner of acculturation into the faith through careful selection of visuals that emphasized the contribution of the young to the survival of creed and community. Within the specific context of Dura, a town uneasily positioned between Rome and Persia, the story of Esther at the court of a Persian monarch would have carried strikingly contemporary connotations. It is a tale of one girl's ingenuity, courage, and determination at a dangerous time for her people who are threatened with annihilation by king (Ahasuerus) and minister (Haman). In the panel Esther is seated behind the monarch (Ahasuerus), to whose harem she had been joined by her scheming uncle (Mordechai), seen riding atop a white horse. She, Mordechai, and King Ahasuerus are labeled.²⁵ Her story is the story of a

²³ Moberly 1988.

²⁴ Modern interpreters of the Dura painting cycle have provided wide-ranging theories about its themes and their meanings. None, to my knowledge, draws attention to the simple fact that the lowest register depicts scenes replete with children.

²⁵ On Persian graffiti, expressing approval of the scene, Daryaei 2010. On Esther see Zlotnick (Sivan) 2002: 76–92; on the all-female collusion to save Moses, and on the widow who accosted Elijah in order to save her son, see Sivan 2004: *passim*. Dura's Esther is thus far unique. The rabbis who dealt with the canonization of Scripture had long debated the inclusion of the scroll in the biblical canon (BT Meg. 7a; BT Sanhedrin 100a), ultimately deciding in favor of its inclusion. It is the sole piece of biblical literature absent from the Qumran library. In spite of rabbinic scruples the story of Esther and its celebration on Purim proved highly popular throughout the Jewish communities both in Palestine and the Diaspora, where public processions numbered adults and children; see Sivan 2008.

young girl acting as instrument of salvation (the biblical scroll does not include a single reference to Yahweh).²⁶ At Dura, the condensed painted narrative of the Scroll of Esther, embedded within a “children register,” rendered children a pivotal part of the machinery of Israel’s longevity.

Scenes of this sort lent themselves to a multiple interplay between sacred text and congregation, between the Land of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, and between children and adults. They also set apart the Jewish community of Dura from its pagan, Mithraic and Christian neighbors who likewise garnished the walls of their sanctuaries with paintings. With the exception of the David scene, all the narratives involving children are set within a Diaspora context or in a borderland. The agents executing or prompting the divine will were either female or gentile. Here a deliberate blurring of boundaries between Diaspora and the biblical heartland may have been at work, shaped also by the intermittent presence of emissaries from Palestine and by visits to and from relatives in Palestine.

How did these visuals socialize the young at Dura? Their biblical ancestors included a boy like Isaac, who was willing to die in obedience to paternal precepts, and a girl, Esther, who submitted to avuncular command to violate the Bible’s own ban on marriage outside the faith. Were these the models that the Durene Jewish children were expected to follow to demonstrate their faith in God? More likely, idolatry, rather than imminent sacrifice or annihilation, posed a constant threat in multiethnic and multireligious communities like Dura. A Talmudic tale featuring Elijah (at Dura both a savior of children and an avenger of Yahweh) and an unnamed child hints at the manner in which textual and visual stimuli operated in tandem to breed Jewishness:

It was related that Elijah the righteous, searching for those languishing of hunger on the streets of Jerusalem in time of famine, found a child [*tinok*, a term ordinarily associated with very young children] lying upon a dung heap. He questioned him as to which family he belonged. The boy answered: “To such and such.” “Are any of your family left?” asked Elijah. “None, except myself,” was the answer. Said Elijah: “If I teach you something by which you may live, will you learn?” “Yes.” “Then recite every day *Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One*” [these are the opening words of the *Shema*, the basic prayer recited by all Jews in the synagogue]. But the child retorted: “*Silence. One ought not to mention the Name*” [Amos 6:10]. Evidently his mother and his father had not taught him [this prayer]. The child then drew out of his bosom an idol which he proceeded to kiss and embrace till his stomach burst. The idol fell to the ground, with the child on it, thus fulfilling the verse: *And I shall cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols.* (Leviticus 26:30)²⁷

²⁶ Throughout the biblical scroll Esther is designated as *naara*, an age that rabbinic sources interpret as that between twelve years and one day and twelve years and six months; see Bamberger 1961: 281–94; Leeb 2000, who also interpreted the term as an orphan or a virtual orphan, unprotected and vulnerable.

²⁷ BT Sanhedrin 63b–64a.

It is precisely within such a multifaceted context where stories of Elijah's feats came to life on the synagogue walls that the Akedah, a would-be infanticide (Genesis 22), would fit into the eclectic collection of the children register at Dura.²⁸ As a narrative with endless exegetical strands it suited multiple stages of children's acculturation. In the liturgy of the synagogue the story became a component of the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), in spite of the fact that Genesis 22 gives no hint of a date.²⁹ Within school curricula, the Akedah narrative, with its infant protagonist, an emblem of purity, provided a partial, if not wholly satisfactory, answer to an odd curricular choice.³⁰ Evidently, the rabbis deemed Leviticus, albeit a text whose appeal to the very young may be doubted, to be a perfect introduction to the study of the Pentateuch. To justify the selection of this least eventful biblical component, some rabbis claimed that Leviticus' overarching concern for purity (of sacrifices) could be matched only by comparison with the innocence of the (human) young.³¹ It was but a short rabbinic step from the requirement of Leviticus 1 regarding the sacrifice of animals as atonement (the victim must be male and without blemish) to the Akedah and Isaac as the ideal "sacrifice." Through school curricula, the one-off act of Genesis 22 had been institutionalized.

THE BIBLE ON THE FLOOR: GALILEAN SYNAGOGUES AND A NEW PEDAGOGY

In a predominantly non-Jewish environment like Dura, visual stimuli like the synagogue pictorial cycles embedded the biblical text within the central communal institution. Perhaps the synagogue, when not attended by adults, served as a schoolroom. Text, traditions, and illustrations projected a *sui generis* Jewish language of birth and childhood in a town where other communities engaged in discourses carved to set them apart. How such distinctions played within the Palestinian homeland in late antiquity is a question that may be addressed through a series of floor mosaics in Galilean synagogues. The date and decoration of these synagogues have been subjects of lengthy scholarly debates.³² Two characteristics are worth noting. First, the mosaics were all embedded in floors of synagogues, so far as one can tell. Whether

²⁸ Elijah who, in his biblical incarnation, had nothing to do with Passover, came to occupy a place of honor in the festive ritual.

²⁹ Gutmann 1984: 115; 1970: 165–8.

³⁰ We do not know whether rabbinic curricular ideals spread to communities like Dura. Hence Leviticus may or may not have been used as the primer for the children of that community.

³¹ LevR (Leviticus Rabbah) 7.3: "let the pure ones come and occupy themselves with the pure ones." This is the conclusion inserted into a brief discussion of the appropriate way to launch the Torah in the schools, whether via Genesis or via Leviticus (ibid.).

³² Sivan 2008.

the walls were covered with plaster paintings cannot be determined. Second, their decorative schemes juxtapose non-Jewish (Helios, zodiac) with Jewish elements (biblical figures, stories, and rabbinic texts). None of the biblical scenes appears, therefore, in isolation.

A recent discovery of a synagogue in Galilean Khirbet Wadi Hamam just northwest of Tiberias, dated to ca. 300 CE, unearthed three fragmentary mosaic panels, all bearing biblical scenes.³³ If the dating is correct, Khirbet Hamam (we have no idea to which Jewish spot the place corresponded in antiquity) constitutes a vital link between two types of synagogues, early Roman (nonfigural or textual) and late Roman (pictorial). Put otherwise, the Hamam series of biblically inspired mosaic pictures seems to have pioneered a new trend in Palestinian synagogal decoration. No less significantly, the discovery of such paintings in a Galilean context that postdates Dura by only half a century suggests that the Durene paintings may not have been a one-of-a-kind phenomenon with neither antecedents nor continuation.³⁴ Does the new visual vogue in the Galilee also reflect new pedagogical approaches to the study of Scripture?

The synagogue's aisles at Hamam were covered with mosaics. The three surviving fragments, executed by different hands, depict a construction scene, a battle scene, and a marine scene. One panel contains schematically drawn groups of workers wielding various building instruments, all apparently engaged in assembling a hexagonal structure (Figure 26.4).³⁵ The most likely interpretation is that the panel represents the narrative in Exodus 1, namely, the labors of the Israelites in Egypt.³⁶ The subject of the second surviving floor panel, executed by a more adept hand, can be easily identified as the passage of the Red Sea (Exodus 14–15) (Figure 26.5). Visible are horses and chariots, both clearly belonging to the Egyptian army, here shown drowning and dismembered. The Exodus sequence in Hamam reflects the perennial popularity of the narrative of bondage and liberation, annually celebrated during Passover. Yet Hamam's Red Sea imagery, with its emphasis on the artful watery blotting of the Egyptian chariots, seems unique amid the panoply of Exodus imagery found in Jewish and Christian art of late antiquity. Pictorial representations of the Red Sea crossing and the Egyptian debacle ordinarily display both

³³ Leibner 2010; Leibner and Miller 2010. I am very grateful to Professor Leibner for granting permission to reproduce these mosaics.

³⁴ A direct link between Dura and Hamam has yet to be established. It is not unlikely.

³⁵ Leibner and Miller 2010: 247 considered Noah's ark (Genesis 6–8), the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 1), the Tabernacle (Exodus 25–6), and Solomon Temple (1 Kings 5–6), opting for the last, not the least on the basis of some similarities with a construction scene featured in the Quedlinburg Itala manuscript. Yet the Temple, a popular theme on Jewish coins, art glass, and mosaics in antiquity, is never shown as a tower, not even as *pars pro toto*. Rather, its façade invariably resembles that of a Greek temple.

³⁶ Excluded by the excavators (Leibner and Miller 2010: 247). The closest parallels to this scene are found in the Ashburnham Pentateuch, an illuminated manuscript dating to the fifth–seventh centuries. Especially noteworthy is the representation of the “pyramids,” not as conventionally pointed monuments but as towers with four, six, or eight sides. See Narkiss 2007 for reproductions and iconography; Sivan 2011 for contextual analysis of the manuscript commission.



FIGURE 26.4 Khirbet Wadi Hamam. The Hebrews in Egypt as slaves engaged in building monuments for the Pharaohs. (Courtesy of U. Leibner, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Photo: G. Laron.)

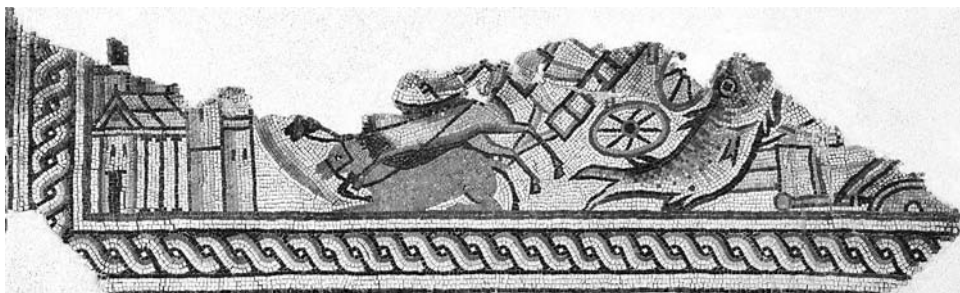


FIGURE 26.5 Khirbet Wadi Hamam. The drowning of the Egyptians' mighty chariots. (Courtesy of U. Leibner, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Photo: G. Laron.)

camps, Hebrews and Egyptians, firmly planted on soil.³⁷ Perhaps the liveliness of the Hamam scene was designed to substitute an ancient enemy (Egypt) for a contemporary forbidden desire (chariot races). Perhaps the dismembered chariots were meant to serve as a warning to children fond of races. Ultimately, artistic versions of Exodus narratives, whether at Hamam or at Dura, highlight the hazards of textual transmission—the

³⁷ These representations appear as far apart as the walls of the Durene synagogue and the arch of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

illuminated story could have come to an artistic end at any moment, depending on the will and whim of donors and artists.

The third mosaic panel at Hamam's synagogue depicts a giant clad in what appears to be a military garb, his oversized hand crushing the heads of three smallish, armed figures (Figure 26.6). Between the giant's feet lie two more figures, dead or dying, while an armed equestrian gallops away from the deadly scene. Of the proposed identifications (i.e. David and Goliath; [1 Samuel 17], Samson smiting Philistines, Og, the giant king of Bashan), the most likely is the first. But the moment depicted is not that of the memorable duel between the youthful David and the giant Philistine. Rather, the mosaic commemorated a battlefield dominated by Goliath, when not a single Israelite, not even David's three older brothers (1 Samuel 17:13), dared to rise to the challenge. This was the background to the dramatic first public appearance of David after his secretive anointing.

Inserted into these visual narratives were brief texts. The Goliath scene was invaded by an Aramaic inscription commemorating a donation made by "sons of Shimon." The construction scene bore an Aramaic inscription that referred to Shmuel the scribe (*sofer*), a title associated with the teaching of children, in itself an activity often placed in the synagogue. Teaching script and Scripture would have benefited from the visual stimuli provided by the pictures on the floors, where height proved no obstacle to vision.



FIGURE 26.6 Khirbet Wadi Hamam. A moment before the memorable clash between an adolescent David and the mighty Philistine warrior Goliath. (Courtesy of U. Leibner, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Photo: G. Laron.)

Perhaps Shmuel was also the donor of the mosaic depicting the labors of Israel in Egypt. He may have even selected its theme. Because the Torah provided a basic text but not a fixed curriculum, teachers and scribes could be selective, teaching only chosen verses and passages.³⁸ The outcome of this lack of uniformity, coupled with uneven information regarding general access to elementary education in Palestine, is reflected in different levels of literacy among Jews. Even in Roman Palestine, in spite of modern scholarly claims of the universality of elementary education, some communities barely boasted a single man able to conduct basic synagogal services.³⁹ Perhaps, then, the sudden appearance of biblical images on synagogue floors (and walls) in late antiquity did herald an innovation designed to “democratize” elementary education.

Teaching apparently took place in synagogues and in adjacent study houses.⁴⁰ In theory, as least, schooling constituted the chief parental obligation. Fathers were held responsible for ensuring that their boys learned Torah. Mothers, too, could earn praise “by sending their sons to learn [Torah] in the synagogues, and their husbands to study in the schools of the rabbis.”⁴¹ The presence and participation of children in synagogue readings (the latter a duty from the age of thirteen and one day) is reflected in the careful construction of synagogal liturgical poetry (*piyyut*). Practitioners of *piyyutim* “graded” their poems, all based on the biblical text, in a manner that proceeded from exceptionally complex and elusive lines to simple references, the latter to be grasped even by children and by men with only rudimentary knowledge of Scripture.⁴²

Like verbal exegesis, pictures introduced a reworking of the biblical stories, invoking a space of imagination and dreams about these events. At Dura and at Hamam, painted panels reflect the centrality of stories, like the Akedah and the Exodus, that have become foundational myths through schooling lessons and annual reenactment. Such painted Bibles represent a system of religion for young people. Accessible to all boys (and girls?)

³⁸ As, reputedly, did Rabbi Akiva when he taught his young son, ARN A 6, with Hezser 2001: 141. Rabbinic recommendations regarding appropriate readings and translations further reflect such selective approach. Among biblical verses that the rabbis recommended to be read only but not to be translated were Genesis 35:22 (Reuven sleeping with his father’s concubine) and the quarrel of Moses and Aaron over the golden calf (Exodus 32:21–35). Among those that the rabbis altogether banned were David’s appropriation of Bath Sheba and the rape of Tamar, daughter of David, by her half-brother Amnon (2 Samuel 11, 13, M Megilla 4:10).

³⁹ T Megilla 3:12 on synagogues in which only one person could read, a statement that prompts reflections on a rabbinic assertion regarding a decree that established schools throughout the land to enroll all Jewish boys of six (BT Baba Bathra 21a). See Hezser 2001: 40–7 for review of scholarship on the matter, concluding that the information is dubious and that the only reliable reference to primary education in the first to second centuries points to the home and the synagogue as learning venues; T Pesahim 10:8 on attending services in synagogues in other towns where locals could conduct the liturgy, with Bar Ilan (1992).

⁴⁰ PT Horayot 2:5, 46d; PT Moed Qatan 3:1, 81d; ARN A 15; PRK 11:16 and 15:5; PT Megilla 1:11, 71d, with Hezser 2001: 51–2.

⁴¹ BT Berachot. 17a. Note, however, that one of the main “trades” that mothers were to teach daughters only concerned public mourning: M Moed Qatan 3:9, based on Jeremiah 9:19.

⁴² Elizur 1994.

and their fathers (and mothers?), these pictures entrenched the stories in the present, forging a distinct identity around the interpretation of origins.⁴³ Although the few modern presentations of Jewish education in antiquity conspicuously lack references to visuals, the very location of biblical paintings in synagogues, whether along a lower register on walls or on floors, would have been calculated to augment a learned text and to put verbal and visual flesh on its multiple meanings. Side by side with mnemonics, a basic strategy of learning, pictures dramatized and transmitted select aspects of the biblical narratives.⁴⁴ Against the background of differing translations and interpretations known to have been in use in late ancient Palestine and the Jewish Diaspora, images, too, dictated a reception of the text within a specific communal context.

The local character of these visuals is reflected in a different interpretation of the figure of David. At the synagogue of Meroth (Upper Galilee), the figure of a man seated on a shield surrounded by weapons has been interpreted as David. This is a militant youth, basking in his triumph against all odds and displaying the loot taken from the body of Goliath.⁴⁵ A donor's inscription complements the image, as though to emphasize the intimate connection between this David and the donation that paid for it.⁴⁶ The text also reflected the individual's commitment to the congregation and to its needs. The selection was hardly accidental. Children at relatively isolated mountainous Meroth would have gorged with gusto on the story of the duel between an adolescent Israelite and a grown-up Philistine. They lived in a community that may have been rarely at peace with itself or with others. A bronze cameo recovered from the site and inscribed in Hebrew and Aramaic (dated to the early seventh century) was purchased or commissioned by one Yossi son of Zenobia, who craved divine assistance to bend the will

⁴³ The questions of the attendance and participation of girls/women in synagogal ceremonies and of girls' educations have yet to be treated in full. References in rabbinic sources point to an ongoing debate between those espousing a modicum of familiarity with Scripture to those favoring the teaching of Greek (Palestinian Talmud Peah 1.1). Most rabbis interpreted Deuteronomy 11:19 (on teaching the Law to children) as implying sons and not daughters (Palestinian Talmud Berachot 3.3). The basic list of female duties vis-à-vis husbands (Mishnah Ketubot 5.5) makes no reference to intellectual attainments or literacy requirements. Girls probably did attend synagogue services, especially when the Scroll of Esther was read on Purim. In general, see Horbury 1999. I address these questions in detail in my forthcoming book on Jewish childhood in antiquity.

⁴⁴ Nor were images solely used as props for school education of the young: in the complicated process of calendrical determinations, especially the day of the new moon, one rabbi had "images of white shapes [painted/engraved] on a tablet and on the wall in his attic to enable inarticulate witnesses to convey precisely the shape of the moon that they had observed" (M Moed 2:8). On the oft-quoted rabbinic dicta regarding art in the synagogue (PT Avoda Zara 3.3 [42d] and Targum Pseudo Jonathan to Leviticus 26:11), see Urbach 1959.

⁴⁵ Ilan and Damati 1987; Ilan 1987; Ilan 1995. The David figure is dated to the late fifth century. The synagogue complex underwent several stages of remodeling between the fourth and the seventh centuries CE.

⁴⁶ On the terminology of such inscriptions, see Safrai 1987, esp. 93–5 for a table summarizing the location, position of donor, and term used to designate donation as well as where the inscriptions were placed.

of the community to his advantage.⁴⁷ Yossi did not invoke the biblical David, but the incantation addresses Yahweh as a militant divinity ready to smite fellow villagers in a single blow.

The association between education and the visual arts matched religious practices with mythic moments. Parentage and founding events transformed children into Jews. A growing emphasis on the acquisition of biblical literacy in late antiquity led to the remodeling of the Meroth synagogue to include two study spaces, a room to teach infants and a Beth Midrash (house of study) to teach adolescents, the latter decorated with stone relief and mosaics.⁴⁸ The arrangement confirms rabbinic instructions regarding the sequence of learning, from Torah to Talmud, and from participatory gestures to full participation in synagogue services. The irenic messages that graced the study area posed a curious contrast to the combative tone of both cameo and mosaic imagery at Meroth. At the entry to Beth Ha-Midrash was engraved a phrase from Isaiah's vision of universal harmony (65:25: "fox and lamb will share a pasture"), complete with appropriate engravings of the relevant animals.⁴⁹

Images brought back the human order of society, effecting a beneficial exchange and reciprocity between texts and learners. When the Hebrew text turned epic, remote from the daily language of pupils, the pictures evoked a sense of an enveloping divine grace. This is why the solemnity of the biblical Akedah (Genesis 22) proved so spellbinding. From Dura to Galilean Sepphoris and Beth Alpha, the Binding of Isaac was featured in a variety of configurations that reflected the pliability of the Genesis story in the hands of teachers, translators, interpreters, and artists. In none does the Akedah feature by itself. In each case it was embedded within either a panoply of biblical episodes (Dura-Europos) or mosaics centering on a zodiac and embellished with symbols associated with the Jerusalemite Temple (Beth Alpha, Sepphoris) and with texts (character names, biblical verses, recorded donations).⁵⁰

On a floor mosaic from the Beth Alpha synagogue (near the Jordan River), baby Isaac (labeled) stares at viewers who would have walked right above him (Figure 26.7). He is clutched in one raised arm of his father Abraham (labeled), whose other arm is brandishing a large knife. This was clearly the most dramatic moment in the entire sequence, exactly when tragedy was ready to strike. The episode is completed with images of the two slave boys who accompanied father and son to the site of the projected sacrifice, the donkey who carried them, and the ram ultimately selected as a substitute. At the center of the mosaic appeared the hand of God, next to the words that saved Isaac (Genesis 22:12–3).

Beth Alpha's Akedah provides the most literal rendering of Genesis 22, a sequence that children could follow verbatim, element by element. Rooted in the biblical text, the

⁴⁷ Naveh 1992: 146–8.

⁴⁸ The debate over whether study spaces were accommodated in synagogues or in separate buildings is likely to be as interminable as are the discussions relating to the dating of Galilean synagogues. See Urman 1987.

⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 28:6; Isaiah 65:25; Ilan 1995 on the rarity of scriptural citations in synagogues.

⁵⁰ On the latter, see Weiss and Netzer 1996. On Sepphoris see also Sivan 2011.



FIGURE 26.7 Beth Alpha. The Akedah: Abraham holding his beloved son as he is about to obey the divine call to sacrifice him. (From Wikimedia Commons. Author: Talmoryair.)

mosaic's vision of the text becomes a heterogeneous juxtaposition of small independent units. It is a mosaic of small reductions that does not challenge the text. And it functions as a perfect synonym for the most basic duty of children vis-à-vis parents, namely, unquestioned obedience. Besides reinforcing the biblical text, visuals like the Beth Alpha mosaic also instilled modes of desired behavior.

South of Meroth, at Sepphoris (Upper Galilee), literalness came with a twist. Here the Akedah apparently consisted of several panels, each representing a stage in the narrative. One, fairly intact, shows a donkey and two men with a mountain and a tree in the background. This is an accurate reflection of Genesis 22:5, in which Abraham specifically commands the slaves to remain at a distance. In the other panel, besides a tree, only two pairs of sandals are visible, one clearly belonging to a child and the other to an adult, both neatly laid side by side. There is no reference in the biblical story to shedding shoes. But the poignant image of the solitary sandals was designed to invoke another biblical narrative. In Exodus 3:5, the voice of the divine, emanating from a burning bush, commands Moses to take off his shoes out of respect for the sanctity of the place. This was a scene of divine revelation, the same kind of manifestation that operated at multiple levels throughout Pentateuchal confrontations between Yahweh and chosen emissaries. In Genesis 22 the divine voice saved the life of Isaac and confirmed the original covenant with Abraham; in Exodus 3, it reconfirmed the covenant between God and Israel.

Webs of synagogue images inextricably mingled the mythic and the concrete. They were aggregations of biblical texts and interpretations. The images planted on the

synagogues' floors project an extension of classroom methodologies of intertwining Scripture and exegesis. They cast synagogues as places where children (and adults) could embark on a visual journey into the universe of Jewish identity. These were spaces of identity consolidation where temporal polarities were juxtaposed in complicity. To emphasize collective identity at Beth Alpha, an Aramaic inscription, fixed below the Akedah, specifically refers to a collective donation of all the members of this rural community.⁵¹ At Sepphoris a large number of inscriptions embedded in the mosaics commemorate donations to the synagogue. A Greek one, placed right above the Akedah, refers to a gift of Boethos and his children (*teknoi*), the latter remaining unnamed. The dedication ends with the word "Amen," written in Hebrew.

Epigraphical children feature regularly in records of synagogal donations. At Sepphoris, both Aramaic and Greek inscriptions refer to children of donors, either by name (in the Aramaic inscriptions) or in generic terms (in the Greek).⁵² Elsewhere, blessing formulas placed at entry to sanctuaries often include a specific reference to the younger members of the congregation.⁵³ Throughout synagogues in the Land of Israel dedicatory inscriptions attest the role of individual and communal evergetism in financing the construction, embellishment, and maintenance of sanctuaries.⁵⁴ The nominal participation of children in these collective enterprises, commemorated in inscriptions and in biblical scenes featuring the young, defined citizenship in terms of descent and good deeds.

CONCLUSION

Within the sanctified space of the synagogue, children were cast as visual archetypes of obedience to parental and divine precepts, reinforcing an orthodoxy anchored in the commonality of language and liturgy. Synagogal pictures of foundational moments featuring children reflect a dialectical relationship with an environment in which Greco-Roman educational practices aspired to groom the young. This was an alphabet that transmitted images, just as Psalms and prayers reinforced the acquisition of Hebrew alphabet. Like visual narratives in Greek and Roman art, pictorial biblical episodes in synagogues reveal a complex set of relationships between texts and art, education and

⁵¹ The Aramaic inscription was inserted below one in Greek that mentions the artists who created the mosaic. On the Aramaic inscription, see Naveh 1978: 72–4, no. 43. On the Greek inscription, see Lifshitz 1967: 77.

⁵² Cf. the Aramaic inscription from Kafr Kanna (Naveh no. 30) that likewise refers to a man, Yoseh son of Tanhum son of Butah, in terms of three male generations, and to his sons, who are not named, who all "made the mosaic."

⁵³ Jericho, Naveh no. 69; cf. no 39 from Isfiya/Husifah, which mentions likewise the "small or young" and the "big or older" members of the village.

⁵⁴ Naveh 1978; Lifshitz 1967.

affiliation, adherence and identity. The emergence of publicly illuminated Bibles on walls and floors, in defiance of an exclusively textual tradition, and the fact that they appear exclusively within the confines of synagogues, hint at a challenge to the established semantic sequence. To tell the story of the Hebrew Bible a new artisanal language was generated to “speak” of birth and breeding.⁵⁵ Synagogal images became both a powerful tool of acculturation and a component of a competitive and collaborative relationship between Judaism and other Roman imperial cultures. Within the “marketplace of religions” of late antiquity, the artists who created these visual stimuli engendered spaces where pictures and the solemnity of ceremonies combined to instill in children a unique sense of identity. Sounds, images and Scripture engulfed the young within a protective envelope of family and community that came regularly together in the synagogue.

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⁵⁵ Scholars have paid attention to the manner in which rabbinic writings project biblical references to seeing: Boyarin 1990; Wolfson 1994, 1996; Bregman 2003; Kessler 2003. None relate pictorial representations to pedagogy, nor do they trace the circumstances that led to the translation of stories from texts to images. I plan to discuss elsewhere the historical context in which to anchor the birth of pictorial *paideia* and how this birth marks the beginning of the so-called childhood and sanctions the beginning of education.

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PART VI

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LATE ANTIQUITY AND
EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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CHAPTER 27

CHILDREN AND “THE CHILD” IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

BLAKE LEYERLE

INTRODUCTION

WITH Christianity came an unprecedented focus on the realities of everyday life. References to children thus abound in the literature of this period. Preachers and theologians not only discuss how Christians should raise their children but also draw on the commonly observed behavior and games of children to explicate scriptural texts, to illustrate ethical tendencies, to make polemical arguments, and to convey theological propositions. In hagiographical stories, the figures of children often advance the plot or provide background texture. This attention to children is the first and most obvious difference that Christianity made to the lives of young people and to our understanding of childhood in late antiquity.

The rise of this religion also brought some new opportunities for children; these were, in the first instance, liturgical and monastic. Alongside such concrete interventions was a developing concept of “the child.” This notion was markedly ambivalent. Extolled, on one hand, as a prime example of admirable humility, freedom from passion, and non-sexual behavior, the child was also invoked pejoratively, as a figure of unrestrained passion, attachment to the world, and carnal desire. Early Christian authors mobilize both sets of associations to convey their understanding of basic human nature and to shame their listeners into moral renovation.

THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

In many fundamental ways, the lives of children were unaffected by Christianity. Children remained highly valued for their contribution to the physical continuity

and economic stability of the family and to the emotional well-being and social status of their parents. To be barren was a social and personal calamity: “Nothing,” John Chrysostom (d. 407) insists, “is more difficult for a woman to bear than sterility” (*De Anna* 2.1). Many of the people who sought out the holy people for help did so to request fertility assistance (Jerome *V. Hil.* 13; Cyr. S. V. *Eythym.* 35.26–36.13; Theodoret *Hist. relig.* 26.21, 13.16–17; Leyerle 2008). What is new in early Christian sources is the level of attention devoted to the emotional consequences of childlessness. Chrysostom, for example, marveled at the suffering women were prepared to undergo to have children:

After all those months, after the unspeakable pains, after the sleepless nights, after the wrenching apart of limbs, some slight accident occurs and she gives birth prematurely to the child in an undeveloped state and not fully formed, or, if fully developed, handicapped, or unhealthy, or even in many cases stillborn, scarcely escaping death herself—yet despite all this, she continues on, as though oblivious of all these perils, and undergoes the same process again. (*Hom. in Genes.* 17.7, PG 53.144c)

Clearly, the advent of Christianity did little to reduce perinatal mortality (*Hom. in Mt.* 31.4–6; Parkin 1992: 92–8; Saller 1994: 20–5). Because infants and children remained very susceptible to disease and early death, Christian parents, like their pagan counterparts, had recourse to apotropaic devices and gestures. Tertullian complains about good luck charms and protective rites involving the infant’s hair (*De anima* 39). Chrysostom inveighs repeatedly against a wide array of protective practices, such as naming rituals, the application of substances (ashes, soot, mud, and salt), the wearing of garments adorned with scarlet thread and bells, and the hanging of inscriptions—including gospel texts—around the children’s necks.¹

The topic of breastfeeding occasioned much comment from early Christian writers, as it had from classical authors (see Parkin in this volume). On the physiology of lactation, it is again Chrysostom who proves himself an especially astute observer:

A loving mother is distressed when she has a child at the breast but is unable to provide it with an abundant flow of milk; yet despite being found wanting she still offers the breast, and the child takes it, and pulls and stretches it, and by warming the cooled nipple with its mouth it entices more than there really is. Though the mother feels sore with the stretching of the breasts, she does not push the child away; being a mother she would prefer to put up with anything rather than upset the baby. (*Hom. in Isa.*, 2, trans. Hill 2003: 61)

Aware that babies nurse for comfort as well as nourishment, Chrysostom also notes that they cannot be coerced into eating more than they want (*Hom. in Mt.* 17.5, 62.4). The

¹ Naming rituals: *Inani glor.* 48.655–7; *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 12.7; *Hom. in Gen.* 21.3; *De Anna* 1.6. Magical substances: *Hom. in Col.* 8.5; *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 12.7. Textual amulets: *De stat.* 19.4; *Quod Christ. sit Deus* 9; *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 12.7; *Hom. in Mt.* 54.4. For illustrations and discussion of some of these devices, see Maguire 1990: 215–24, esp. 216; Engemann 1975: 22–48, esp. 42–7; Leyerle 2008, Leyerle forthcoming 2013.

ability of infants to express emotion was famously noted by Augustine (d. 430), who observed the "pale and bitter expression" on a baby's face at the sight of another baby nursing at the same breast (*Conf.* 1.7). Like classical theorists, Christians assumed that character traits were transmitted along with breast milk. Thus, Gregory of Nyssa (d. 395) carefully notes that, although his sister Macrina had a nurse, she was chiefly breast-fed by their mother (*V. Macrinae* 3). Compared with elite pagans, Christians seem to have worried less about the moral effects of placing babies out to nurse with slaves.

To dissuade older children who still wanted to nurse, mothers would try ridicule, the application of bitter salves, and creative substitution, such as offering a tempting array of little baskets filled with appealing foods (Chrysost. *Hom. in Mt.* 30.6; *De virg.* 175.60–3; *Hom. in Col.* 4.4; Fildes 1986: 377–84). The first solid food would first be "softened" by premastication (*Hom. in Mt.* 17.6). Later on, sweets and fruits would be placed in a pocket made out a fold of the child's tunic secured with a belt (*Hom. in Isa.* 3). Such detailed knowledge on the part of a celibate cleric raises intriguing questions. Unlike Augustine, who had fathered a child, Chrysostom had no personal experience of child-rearing. If he derived his information wholly from observation, we must assume that nursing and weaning were relatively common sights.

Toys were a recognized part of infancy (Horn 2005: 95–116). In addition to the aforementioned little baskets, Chrysostom refers to rattles (*Hom. in 1 Cor.* 4.6). He describes toddlers struggling in the arms of their parents (*ibid.*) and clamoring for things they should not have:

But just as when we see a young child crying, and persistently wanting to get something from us that is not appropriate for him, we hide it, and show him our empty hands, saying, "Look, I don't have it!" so Christ did with the Apostles. And just as the little child, knowing that he has been tricked, continues to cry, even when we show him [our empty hands], with the result that we abandon the attempt and leave, claiming, "Someone is calling me!" and give him something else instead to distract him from the thing he wants, telling him that it is a much more wonderful thing than the other, so Christ acted. (*Hom. in acta apost.* 2.2, PG 60.27; cf. *Hom. in Mt.* 17.2)

Other toys included tops, hoops, dice (*astragaloi*), heads (*kephalai*), and balls.² Jerome mentions the appeal of shiny stones (*Ep.* 128.1.3). Boys might have model chariots of clay fitted out with wheels that rolled, horses in harness, and a charioteer. Older boys might cherish school supplies such as silver pencils and writing tablets fashioned out of fine wood and held together by bronze chains and a handsome strap (*Inani glor.* 73.900–5). Some might have their own horse or bird (Chrysost. *Adv. oppug.* 3.7; Isaac of Scetis *Asceticon*, Discourse 8; August. *Conf.* 1.19.30). Girls might be given dolls made of clay or

² *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 4.6; *Hom. in Jo.* 71.2; *Hom. in Mt.* 47.5 (Migne glosses *kephalai* with *psephides*, a small stone or pebble for counting); *Hom. in Heb.* 25.2; *Exp. in Ps.* 143; Rufinus, *Apol. adv. Hier.* [Apology against Jerome] 2.22. The *Digest* envisages the possibility of fatal accidents as a result of ball games (*Dig.* 9.2.11 [Ulpian] and 9.2.52.4 [Alfenus]); Hett 1932: 24–9; Kastner 1995: 85–100; Horn 2005: 97–105.

bone (*Hom. in Jo.* 81.3; *Jerome Ep.* 128.1; Wiedemann 1989: 149–50; see also the chapter by Harlow in this volume).

Preachers also mention a variety of games. Gregory of Nyssa describes very young children trying to catch sunbeams in their hands or to pelt the stars with clods of earth. When they open their fingers and find them empty or when the dirt falls back to Earth, they “clap their hands and laugh” (*Eun.* 7). The pastime of skipping stones was observed by the early third-century apologist Minucius Felix in arresting detail (*Octav.* 3), and a version of tug-of-war was known to Chrysostom (*De stat.* 14.4). With knucklebones, nuts, or pebbles, children played a variety of games accompanied by simple chants; it is quite possible that Augustine overheard some such refrain (“Choose and take away!”) in the garden at Milan (*Conf.* 8.12; Matthews 2010). Chrysostom had observed boys acting out plays of social deference in which one little boy, who had been appointed general, strolled with the appropriately slow gait of a leader, surrounded by other children playing soldiers, heralds, and lictors (*Hom. in Mt.* 23.9; *Hom. in Rom.* 17.5; *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 1.3). Other cooperative play included giving pretend dinner parties or making houses, ramparts, and fortifications out of mud and bits of pottery (Chrysost. *Hom. in Mt.* 23.9; Greg. Nys. *Eun.* 10). Girls enjoyed playing with miniature storage chests, outfitted with locks and keys (*De virg.* 73.18–14). All of these games certainly provided an opportunity to rehearse future adult roles, but it would be a mistake to overlook the ways in which children’s play represents creative social action rather than simple imitation (Leyerle 1997; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998: 90–3; see also the chapter by Vuolanto in this volume).

Other games had a pronounced Christian inflection. Theodoret (d. 457), for example, recounts a story in which servant girls took the role of demons in a game of exorcism (*Hist. relig.* 9.9). But the game most often recounted is “playing church.” Rufinus (d. 410) describes how Athanasius (d. 373), as a boy, was discovered acting “bishop” on the beach, having appointed some of his companions to serve as his priests and deacons (Rufinus *Hist. eccl.* 1.14; cf. Paulinus *V. Ambr.* 2.4; *V. Caesar. Arl.* 1.3; see also Vuolanto in this volume). John Moschus (d. 619) knew a variant version of the same game, where the role-playing illuminated not the future career of one of the children but rather local tensions between Jews and Christians (*Prat. spir.* 243).

Many of these games attract further interest in that they occur in the context of work. Certainly elite children, like Jerome, would play in the parts of the house where the slaves were working (*Apol. adv. Ruf.* 1.30). But working children also found time to play. The servant girls, who acted out their game of demons and monks with a cook, did so presumably during a pause in their domestic labors. The shepherd boys John Moschus described as playing Eucharist did so after their midday meal, during the only break in a workday that stretched from dawn to dusk (*Prat. spir.* 196; cf. *Hist. monach.* 9.11). Other kinds of work performed by girls included textile manufacture. John of Ephesus (d. ca. 586) tells us that Maria spun and wove goat hair so faultlessly that her mother was freed to pursue her charitable labors unhindered. Interestingly, this text also preserves the objections of others, who commented disapprovingly, “Your mother leaves you at work by

yourself all day." The girl's response articulates a clear sense of her necessary participation in the workforce: "My mother's labor is greater than all labors, and God strengthens me through her prayers" (*Life of Mary and Euphemia*, trans. Brock and Harvey 1987: 128). In monasteries or at home, children might be assigned to work in the gardens, to draw water, to gather wood, or to help with the bread baking (*Gosp. Thomas* 11, 12, 16; Chrysost. *Hom. in Genes.* 14.10; Cyr. S. V. *Sab.* 88.19–90.4, 92.9–16; V. *Cyriac.* 225.1–5). In urban centers, children might work as open-air entertainers: dancing and singing, doing acrobatic tricks, or performing in street theater (Chrysost. *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 12.10; *De stat.* 19.13; V. *Sym. Sal.* 4).

Child apprentices occasionally appear in hagiographical legends. When a plasterer named Mamas from Bethlehem was hired to build a reservoir and cistern for the community of Sabas (d. 532), he brought along "a boy called Auxentius as his apprentice" (Cyr. S. V. *Sab.* 187.10–21; cf. *Gosp. Thomas* 10). Chrysostom also mentions child apprentices, noting how masters customarily threaten them that they will get nothing to eat or drink until their work is done (*De stat.* 14.1; Bradley 1991: 103–24). Homiletic and hagiographic literature shows how children made an important and visible contribution to their families' resources by their work.

Even where their labor is not specified, hagiography allows us glimpses into a world where children were a ubiquitous presence. When the monk, John Colobos went to visit a woman working in a brothel, the children of the doorkeeper mocked him. The terms of their abuse reveal a clear understanding of the economic basis of prostitution: "What have you to give her that makes you want to meet her?" (*Apophth. patr.* John Colobos, 40; cf. *Acta Petri* 9). In the Byzantine life of Andrew of the Holy Fool (tenth century), we meet a far more unruly band of urban children, called "the Archbishop's boys" (V. *Andr. Sal.* 19.1217–23). Not only did they steal clothing from Andrew, the holy fool, as he slept on the streets, but they also amused themselves with acts of violence, beating and slapping him and smearing his face with charcoal (V. *Andr. Sal.* 12.1235–40). Augustine tells stories of similar gangs of youths who delighted in nocturnal "street games" that included theft and vandalism and in hazing new students (*Conf.* 2.4, 3.3). The sadistic adventures of schoolboys make an appearance in several martyr accounts (Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 5.10; Prudentius *Peristeph.* 9).

The exploits of bad boys notwithstanding, it is more often the vulnerability of children that early Christian writings illuminate. Chrysostom notes domestic perils such as snakes and reptiles (*Exp. in Ps.* 116), and hagiography is full of stories of children falling from heights and into fires, getting bitten or trampled by animals, or being injured at work.³ In addition to accidents, children were also very susceptible to sickness and to the demonic possession to which it was intimately allied. Many of the afflicted brought to the holy people for healing were children.⁴ Where the presenting cause is specified, the

³ An infant who had fallen to his death: John Moschus *Prat. spir.* 233; a boy bitten by a rabid dog: *Hist. monach.* 22.3; a child trampled by a mule: Cyr. S. V. *Sab.* 82.

⁴ *Apophth. patr.*, Macarius 6, 15; Cyr. S. V. *Euthym.* 18.15–21.19; *Hist. monach.* 9.11; cf. Laes 2011a: 41–3; Leyerle 2008; Holum 2009: 143–70.

range of affliction is very broad and includes some unusual and bizarre ailments. When a relative of Abba Poemen, for example, had a child “whose face, through the power of the devil, was turned backwards” (*Apophth. patr.*, Poemen, 7), he brought the boy to the desert ascetic. Although Poemen was a gifted healer, he initially refused all aid. This unwelcoming attitude seems to have stemmed from a resolve to shield his monastic freedom from the incursions of very large extended family. Eventually, Poemen was coerced into giving his blessing, and the child was made whole. Compared with such colorful afflictions, homiletic material is a model of sobriety, with its emphasis on fever and convulsions as the most common ailments (Chrysost. *Hom. in acta apost.* 38; *Hom. in Maccab.* 1.6)—a finding corroborated by our evidence of regular recourse to amulets and incantations for precisely these symptoms (Trzcionka 2007:121–41; Leyerle forthcoming).

Sickness affected all children, girls as well as boys. Monks, although often averse to any contact with adult women, seem not to have felt squeamish about treating girls. When a man brought his demon-possessed daughter to Sabas, the holy man was willing to help: “taking the girl and her father into a garden apart and telling her to undress, he anointed her whole body from tip to toe, front and back” (Cyr. *S. V. Sab.* 164.10–24, Price 1991: 174). Cyril of Scythopolis (d. 558) makes no comment on this unusually thorough contact, noting only that the girl “was healed from that hour.” A particularly graphic story concerns another little girl whose sickness was so extreme that even her parents felt revulsion. Her body was “so diseased in all its parts that the flesh was eaten away and the inside parts were laid bare, and there an innumerable host of worms was breeding, so that no one was able to come near her because of the horror of the stench.” Through prayer and the application of blessed oil, Macarius effected a cure as remarkable as the illness: penetrating below the presenting affliction, he healed the deeper “problem” of sexual allurements. He cured the girl “in such a way that no female parts were apparent, so that in all her contact with men, she never beguiled them with womanly deceits” (Rufinus’ additions to the *Hist. monach.*, 21, Russell 1980: 151). This story, like that of Poemen previously discussed, illustrates the difficulty of disentangling evidence about the lives of children from the ideological messages the stories were principally designed to convey.

For the many children who did not receive miraculous cures and died of their afflictions, the church offered consolation. Preachers reminded their listeners that death is natural and no more to be feared than sleep (Chrysost. *De stat.* 5.4, 7.1; Laes 2011b), but also expressed sympathy for parental grief and the ritual gestures by which it was both expressed and controlled. Writing on the death of Job’s children, Chrysostom observes:

Their father did not see them laid upon a bed, nor did he kiss their hands, nor hear their last words, nor did he touch their hands and knees, nor did he close their mouths, nor did he shut their eyes when they were just about to die—acts which offer not a little consolation to parents who are being parted from their children. (*Ep. ad Olymp.* 17.2, SC 13bis: 374)

Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote the first treatise dedicated to the topic of infant death, addressed not the pastoral issues but rather the philosophical conundrum of what would become of the child's soul (*De infant. abrept.*; cf. Greg. Naz. *Or.* 40.17, 23, 28; Braun 1994: 118; Gould 1994: 48–52; Doerfler 2011). In the West, the notion of limbo gradually developed as a fitting place of postmortem repose (August. *De libro arbit.* 3; *De peccat. merit.* 1.21; *Contra Iul.* 5.44).

The vulnerability of children extended beyond the threat of illness and accidents to that of abandonment and exploitation. The early apologists insist that Christians, unlike their non-Christian neighbors, refused to practice birth control or abortion and raised all the children born to them.⁵ Later literature suggests that the exposure of infants continued, especially in times of economic crisis.⁶ Even children who had been accepted into the family, however, might find themselves abandoned upon the death of one or both of their parents (Scheidel 2009). Remarriage brought its own problems. Jerome speaks for many when he warns a widow that, if she remarries, she will give her children "not a stepfather but an enemy, not a parent but a tyrant" (*Ep.* 54.15.4; cf. *Ep.* 123; Chrysost. *De non it.* 6; *De sacerdot.* 1.5; *Vid. elig.* 5–6; Nathan 2000: 121; Huebner 2009).

From Judaism, Christianity inherited a keen sense of responsibility for orphans (Sigismund 2009). A variety of texts urges Christians to raise orphans as their own (Shep. Herm. *Sim.* 5.3; *Apostolic Constitutions* 4.1.1). The account of the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas preserves an actual instance of such adoption. When the slave, Felicitas, gives birth shortly before her death to a daughter, the editor adds that "one of the sisters brought her up as her own daughter" (*Passio Perp.* 15). While most orphans were probably raised by relatives, as seems to have been the case with Perpetua's own infant son (*ibid.*, 3, 5), those without family might turn to church foundations (Miller 1996: 125–6). Bishops were charged with maintaining orphans: ideally, they were to provide for girls until they married and to assist boys in learning a trade until they could support themselves (Justin Martyr *Apol.* 1.67.6–8; *Apostolic constitutions* 4.1–2; Ambr. *De offic.*, 2.70–1; Socrates *H.E.* 2.28; Cyr. S. V. *Abraam.* 247.6–10). A portion of the money donated to the church was set aside for this ministry. One of the oldest and most prestigious charitable foundations in Constantinople was the *Orphanotropheion*, which was established in the middle of the fourth century (Miller 1993). From the time of Basil, monasteries were often involved in the nurture and education of orphans, even, in the case of one monastery, locating wet nurses for abandoned infants (Bas. *Reg. fus.* 15; *V. Sym. J.* 1.146–47; Miller 1996: 127–33).

Given their relative powerlessness, children were vulnerable to physical aggression. Corporal discipline was routine. The ideal was always moderation, but punishment could easily become excessive (Chrysost. *Cataches.* 2.4; *Exp. in ps.* 117; De Bruyn 1999; Laes 2005). As an adult, Augustine retained a vivid memory of the beatings he received at school and

⁵ Justin Martyr *Apol.* 1.29; Minucius Felix *Octav.* 30.2; Tertullian *Apol.* 9.8; cf. August. *De nuptiis et concup.* 1.17. Horn and Martens 2009: 18–20, 214–7, 222–5; Koskenniemi 2009: 88–145; for procured sterility, see Chrysost. *Hom. in Matt.* 28.5.

⁶ Bas. *Hexameron* 8.6; August. *Ep.* 98.6; Garnsey 1991: 53–6; Harris 1994: 3–8; Harper 2011: 396, 416–23; Vuolanto 2003, 2011; Evans Grubbs 2011; see also Evans Grubbs in this volume.

the fear he felt toward his teachers (*Conf.* 1.9.15). In unusual circumstances, punishment could become lethal. When a monk discovered a boy greedily eating a fish, he kicked him angrily; the boy, struck hard on a vulnerable spot, died (*Apophth. patr.* Gelasius, 3).

Economic hardship brought additional risks. Parents might make the difficult decision to give their children as pledges on a loan or to lease their labor for an extended period, or even to sell them.⁷ Stories from the Egyptian desert describe children being seized to repay in part a loan (*Apophth. patr.* Macarius, 7) or to pay off a crushing tax burden (Rufinus, *Hist. monach.* 16.1.6–9). Chrysostom preserves yet more chilling expedients, suggesting that some parents blinded their children to make them more effective beggars (*De eleem.* 6; *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 21.6; cf. Laes 2011a: 44–7). Casual comments, preserved in hagiography, suggest a widespread acceptance of child slavery. Thus, when demons harassed the holy man, Theodore of Sykeon (end of the sixth century), he rebuked them “as if they were cheap little boys destined to slavery” (*V. Theod. Syk.* 116, Dawes and Baynes 1996: 166; cf. *Apophth. patr.* Arsenius 32). The early fourth-century council of Elvira confirms the troubling use of children in prostitution (canon 12; Harper 2011: 308–9). Augustine describes a local band of slave traders who both bought and kidnapped children for sale overseas (*August. Ep.* 10*); it was not, he makes clear, an isolated problem. Arranging for the ransoming of kidnapped children was among the legal duties of a bishop, according to Ambrose (*De offic.* 2.70–1). Whether kidnapped, leased, sold, or born into slavery, the situation of slave children was one of inherent vulnerability and exploitation. It remains a question whether Christianity effected any significant improvement in their lot. While most patristic authors condemn specific abuses, they do not question the institution of slavery. It is possible, however, that all slaves—including children—benefited from the church’s consistent condemnation of any extramarital sexual encounter. While the sexual use of children undoubtedly still occurred, it was considered gravely sinful: no case could be made for pederasty as an acceptable practice (Chrysost. *De s. Bab.* 9; Chrysost. *Adv. oppug.* 3.8; Festugière 1959: 188, 195, 197, 208; Horn and Martens 2009: 225–39).

As even this brief survey suggests, the first significant difference that Christianity made to the lives of children was an enhanced attention to their lives and pursuits. This surge of interest was prompted in part by their visible presence and active participation in religious rites and rituals.

CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

From the very beginning, children were present in early Christian communities (Osiek 2011). Keith Hopkins (1998: 204) estimated that children would have made up

⁷ Bas. *Hom.* 6.4; Bas. *Hom.* 2 in ps. 14.4; Bas. *Hom. in illud Luc., destruum* 4, with Holman 2001: 68–9; Ambr. *Tob.* 8.29–30; Gregory the Great *Epp.* 5.38, 3.55, 4.43. Vuolanto 2003 presented the economic situation lucidly, disentangling the question of sale from that of leasing and arguing that leasing of labor lies in continuity with contracts of apprenticeship (cf. Harper 2011: 392–423).

approximately 40% of any typical congregation. Their status within the assemblies, however, remains less certain, given the debate over the historical origin of infant baptism (Horn and Martens 2009: 268–9). Certainly the fact that second- and third-century sources record the practice of infant baptism without comment suggests that it was already a traditional practice (Tertullian *De bapt.* 18; *Const. apost.* 21; Origen *Hom. in Luc.* 14; Origen *Hom. in Levit.* 8.3; Cyprian *Ep.* 64.5.2; Cyprian *De laps.* 9; Ferguson 2009). That it was not universal is evident from the biographies of some of the most prominent leaders of the fourth-century church, such as Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Basil, and Gregory, who were all baptized as adults, despite having been raised in Christian families (Bakke 2005: 242–6). In this liturgical practice, as in others, diversity seems to have been the rule.

Whether performed early or late, baptism remained a ritual of new birth. All the newly baptized, no matter what their chronological age, were referred to as *infantes* (*Barn.* 6.11; *Clem. Paed.* 1.6). Preaching to the newly baptized, Augustine explained that they were so called because they had been born from the womb of the mother church, having God as their father and other Christians as their siblings; like neonates, they were clothed in white garments (*Serm.* 260A.1, 260C.1.7; cf. 376A.1). The shape of baptismal pools often reflected this imagery, with neophytes emerging into their new Christian life through the round—or indeed, labial-shaped—basin of the font (Jensen 2005: 138, color plate E).

Allied to baptism was reception of the Eucharist. Cyprian notes the practice of children, too young to speak, receiving communion (*De laps.* 25–6). A specialized role for child communicants is suggested by John Moschus for fifth-century Constantinople. When church officials were confronted with a large amount of excess consecrated bread, they called upon school-aged children to consume it. Presumably it was considered more fitting for them to do so than adults (*Prat. spir.* 243). When the western pilgrim Egeria traveled to Jerusalem in the late fourth century, she was struck by the participation of children of all ages, including “the smallest” and those “too young to walk,” in the Holy Week processions around Jerusalem (*Itin. Eg.* 31.3, 36.2). In some communities, children may have formed a distinct ecclesial group, comparable to that of the widows and virgins (Hippolytus *Trad. Ap.* 26.28; *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.57.12, 8.6.9; *Didascalia apostolorum* 2.57.8). Monastic texts assume that children could be appointed as readers in the churches. At three years old, Euthymius, who would become one of the founders of Judean monasticism, was presented to the local bishop, baptized, given the tonsure, and made a lector in the church (Cyr. S. V. *Euthym.* 10.10–11.22; cf. V. *Sab.* 180.8–15; Brown 1988: 324–6).

New feasts celebrating children arose in the fourth and early fifth century. Of these, the most prominent was undoubtedly Christmas, which was observed in Rome as early as 354 CE. Prior to this time, the birth of Christ was commemorated together with his baptism as an adult, on the feast of Epiphany (Dix 2003: 357). The feast was still sufficiently novel that Chrysostom felt compelled to defend December 25 as the actual day of Jesus’ birth (*In diem natal.* 1; *De beato Philog.* 3–4). Another new feast focusing on children, introduced in the fourth century, was that of the seven martyred sons of

Maccabees (Vinson 1994). In the fifth century, the infants slaughtered by Herod, who had been regarded as martyrs since at least the time of Irenaeus (*Adv. haer.* 3.16), were given their own feast day (Dudley 1994: 234–5).

THE IDEAL CHILD

Prompting these liturgical developments was ongoing reflection on Scripture, for Jesus himself seemed to have espoused a notable openness to children when he praised the intuitive grasp of infants, exhorted his followers to become like little children, and announced that the kingdom of heaven belonged to such as these (Matthew 11:25, 18:2–4, 19:13–4 and parallels). By focusing attention on the low social status of children, Jesus held up the child as a model of humility for the men who followed him. Later exegetes elaborated upon this point, but none so insistently as Chrysostom:

[Jesus] not only presents the pattern, but even sets the child in the middle, by the very sight shaming them, and persuading them to be similarly humble and artless. For the little child is devoid of envy, and vainglory, and desire for preeminence; and he possesses the greatest virtue: simplicity, and artlessness, and humility. (*Hom. in Mt.* 58.2, PG 58.569)

According to Chrysostom, the young child is “by nature” free from all passion. In a somewhat similar fashion, the Shepherd of Hermas praises those who have retained the innocence of children “in whose heart no evil originates” (*Sim.* 9.29.1–3; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:20). Repeatedly, Clement of Alexandria reiterates the ideal of childlike simplicity in his treatise on Christian formation (*Paed.* 5; Bakke 2005: 56–109).

Other early texts concentrate on the sexual aspect of innocence. Logion 37 of the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*, dating from the early second century, reads:

His disciples said: When will you be revealed to us and when will we see you? Jesus said: When you unclothe yourselves without being ashamed and take off your clothes and put them under your feet as little children and tread on them, then [shall you see] the Son of the Living One and you shall not fear.. .

This enigmatic saying, while undoubtedly connected to the rite of baptism (in which initiates stripped off their clothing and became “children”) links childhood with Edenic innocence (Smith 1966). By returning to a kind of presexual state, one becomes “a child.”

Identified as a blend of humility, freedom from passion, and asexuality, the ideal child thus took on a notably ascetic cast. And indeed, Chrysostom praises children for living “the angelic life” (a term usually denoting asceticism) “by nature,” whereas adults must struggle to attain this state (*Hom. in Mt.* 62.4; *Quod Christ. sit Deus* 3; *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 36.1). Traces of this idealized figure of the child occur in monastic literature. When some monks complain to Poemen about the disruptive cries of children, he

asks them whether they want to leave "because of the voices of angels" (*Apophth. patr.*, Poemen 155). Pachomius, who was one of the founders of communal monasticism in Egypt, decreed that when his monks gathered for assemblies, they were "to put on their heads soft cowls like children" (*V. Pachom.* MS Monac. graec. 3; Horn and Martens 2009: 326).

This quasi-monastic view of children no doubt facilitated the idea that children were suitable candidates for religious life. According to Theodoret and Cyril of Scythopolis, even very small children might join communal monasteries. Heliodorus had been only three when he entered an enclosed community in Syria: as an old man, "he claimed not even to know the shape of pigs or cocks or the other animals of this kind" (*Hist. relig.* 26.4). Euthymius, Sabas, and Abraamius were all "dedicated to God from infancy" (Cyr. S. V. *Euthym.* 8.7–10, 60.8–10; V. *Sab.* 180.9–15, 196.12, 196.20–4; V. *Abraam.* 244.1–2).

John of Ephesus tells us openly what we might otherwise only have suspected, namely, that not all young people entered willingly. He records how Simeon "the Mountaineer" first induced parents to bring their little children to church by promising to give them presents and then locked the doors and forcibly tonsured about thirty of them. The children's reaction to their forced monastic inscription was mixed: some wept, but others kept silent. The parents were less restrained: they showed "violent indignation" and tried to drag their children away. But Simeon won in the end, as his prediction that every child taken from him would die was quickly fulfilled (*Lives of the Eastern Saints*, trans. Brooks 1923: 242–6). While such extreme compulsion was probably unusual, familial pressure no doubt affected the decisions of children. Sabas, for example, was only five when he offered himself to a Judean monastery (Cyr. S., V. *Sab.* 87.1–26). This course of action seems to have been prompted, at least in part, by his parents' decision to leave him behind in Cappadocia when they moved to Alexandria and his uncles' subsequent squabbling over his inheritance. It is, of course, quite likely that hagiography has exaggerated the precocious vocation of these founding figures. Most oblates were probably somewhat older, at least eight or ten, if not adolescents (*Hist. monach.* 1.10; V. *Theod. Syk.* 25; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1973: 77–83; Vuolanto 2009).

The Rules of Pachomius, Shenoute, Basil, and Benedict all presume the presence of subadult members (Schroeder 2009: 317–38). It is the Basilian form of monasticism, however, with its overtly familial basis that shows the most openness to children, girls as well as boys (Elm 1994: 60–105). Rule 15 avers, "We deem every time of life, even the very earliest, suitable for receiving applicants" (*Reg. fus.* 15; cf. *Ep.* 199.18). Such deliberate presentation of the monastery as another family no doubt eased the decision of children to don the monastic habit (Talbot 1990: 121; Binns 1994: 93–4). Thanks to the ongoing osteological analysis of St. Stephen's monastery in Jerusalem, we now have physical corroboration of this monastic pattern. Bones taken from one of the burial crypts have revealed the presence of a surprisingly large number of subadults (Leyerle 2003; Schwebach, Holden, and Ullinger 2003). Some of these children were likely orphans, who had been "entrusted" to the care of monks, but others would have been offered up by their parents or, like Sabas, have joined of their own accord (Cyr. S. V. *Sab.* 87.12–24; cf. Bas. *Reg. brev. tract.*).

“The child” that emerges from the Rules, however, is rather different from that conveyed by Jesus’ idealizing words. While Basil freely notes the simplicity, candor, and transparency of children, he also lists common faults: anger, greed, and unruliness. The *Sayings* tradition also suggests that children lack discipline, and are prone to greediness (*Apophth. patr.*, Gelasius 3; Macarius, 37). The ideal monk is an elder (literally, “an old man”) who has grown perfect in virtue by long years of asceticism (*Apophth. patr.*, Poemen, 61; Cyr. S. V. Sab. 94.14; Palladius *Hist. Laus.* 42.15; Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.14.2; Festugière 1960: 137–9; Horn and Martens 2009: 325–6). This view of children bespeaks a more biological perspective, in which childhood is regarded as a transitional and imperfect state; it too can be supported by scriptural references. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul acknowledges, “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways” (1 Corinthians 13:11; cf. 14:20). Because children are immature, they need training and correction. Thus, all of the Rules that mention children lay out a program of formation that combines educational and moral goals. In this twofold finality, they were entirely traditional, but in their specific educational goals they articulate a difference from the classical world.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* evinces great interest in education, relating three separate attempts to teach the child Jesus. The first occurs when Jesus is five years old. A teacher, who witnesses Joseph’s attempt to discipline his son and Jesus’ sharp reply (“Do you not know that I am yours? Do not vex me”), offers his services. Not only will he teach the child letters and “all knowledge,” but he will also train him “to salute all the older people and honor them as grandfathers and fathers, and to love those of his own age” (6.2, with Schneemelcher 1991: 445). The inculcation of correct social behavior was as much a part of classical education as the acquisition of literacy. It was thus in these terms that Irenaeus lauded the effects of the incarnation: by becoming a child, Jesus had become an example to children “of piety, righteousness, and submission” (*Adv. haer.* 2.21.4). The *Apostolic Constitutions* likewise advises parents to make their children “subject from infancy” (4.11.4).

The creation of disciplined bodies was a major goal of monastic formation. Deference for the social hierarchy remained important, but its role was secondary to the control of passions. Basil, for example, sought to modify inappropriate feelings by prescribing the opposite behavior. Greed, he believed, could be cured by fasting; angry outbursts by patient service; gossip, insults, and lies by enforced silence (*Reg. fus. tract.*, 15). This nuanced approach devolved, by the time of Benedict’s Rule (ca. 530), into a blanket endorsement of fasts and beatings (*Reg.* 30, cf. 45, 70).

Accompanying monastic disciplinary regimes was an educational program. As in classical education, the acquisition of literacy proceeded through recognized stages. All monks, Pachomius insisted, were to be taught to read, learning first “the fundamentals

of a syllable" and then the verbs and nouns (*Pr.* 139, trans. Veilleux 1981: 166). Jerome recommended a similar regime when writing to his friend Laeta on how to raise her daughter, Paula, who had been dedicated to a life of virginity before she was born. Laeta should first acquire a set of letters for Paula, made of boxwood or ivory:

Not only make her grasp the right order of the letters and see that she forms their names into a rhyme, but constantly disarrange their order and put the last letters in the middle and the middle ones at the beginning that she may know them all by sight as well as by sound. Moreover, as soon as she begins to use the style upon the wax, and her hand is still faltering, either guide her soft fingers by laying your hand upon hers, or else have simple copies cut upon a tablet, so that her efforts confined within these limits may keep to the lines traced out for her and not stray outside of these. (*Ep.* 107.4, trans. *NPNF*, 191; Petersen 1994; Katz 2007)

Like Basil, Jerome recommends rewards and emulation rather than compulsion (*Ep.* 107.4).

Once the alphabet had been mastered, the child was ready to begin reading. Instead of the classical authors, monastic legislators recommended the study of Scripture. Even vocabulary words should be drawn from biblical texts. "In place of myths," Basil counseled, "historical accounts of admirable deeds should be told to them." Maxims from Proverbs were especially useful, but the central text for monastics was undoubtedly the psalter (*Reg. fus.* 15; Jerome *Ep.* 107.4, 12; Greg. Nys. *V. Macr.* 3; Cyr. S. *V. Sab.* 180.24–5). By poring over these texts, the child would learn not only foundational religious stories but also moral principles. Scripture was the backbone of this new curriculum.

From the late fourth century, we have an unusual pedagogical treatise written by John Chrysostom. Like Jerome, he spoke to the formation of elite children, but unlike Jerome he wrote this work for lay children—primarily boys—who would grow up to marry and pursue secular careers. His overarching goal was to stem the cultural reproduction of classical society, as is apparent even from the title: *On Vainglory or How to Raise your Children* (Leyerle 1997). Like monastic oblates, these children must learn to restrain their passions and to prefer simple food and unadorned clothing. To achieve this end, Chrysostom recommends a multifaceted approach. Physical punishments and tangible rewards continue to have a place, but far more important are psychological techniques. He endorses fear and ridicule as effective aversive strategies and suggests that boys can be trained to restrain their anger through a program of deliberate provocation (*Inani glor.* 30, 68, 73, 79; cf. *De stat.* 19.14). The primary method of formation, however, is a carefully sequenced program of storytelling. Echoing Basil and Jerome, Chrysostom urges that biblical stories supplant "tales of golden fleece" (*Inani glor.* 39). The morals Chrysostom draws reinforce the message of careful control of the passions.

Much of this program looks very familiar. Plato also set about changing society by focusing on the upbringing of children. He too worried about the effect of inappropriate stories—and suggested alternatives. Indeed, Chrysostom underscores his indebtedness

to Plato by replicating key metaphors. He too imagines the child as a newly founded city with a variety of vulnerable gates and depicts the child's soul as comprising difficult to manage horses as well as a governing element (*Inani glor.* 23–38, 54–6, 63, 65, 76; cf. Plato *Rep.* 2.368e–69a; *Phdr.* 246b). Such striking similarities underscore a real difference in goals. Chrysostom evinces no interest in political life: his focus remains firmly fixed on the individual, and the only glory he finds worthy of pursuing is that bestowed by God.

Chrysostom's treatise, like Jerome's advice, thus shows a marked affinity with monastic legislation. Unlike the scattered references to children found in monastic legislation, his treatise discusses childrearing in an explicit and systematic fashion. The disadvantage of the text, however, is that we have no guarantee that any actual parents shared these views or that its recommendations were ever put into practice. What the text does reveal is a systematic desire to extend monastic formation to secular urban children (Brown 1988: 305–22).

The fact that Chrysostom's target audience seems undeniably elite is not unexpected, as education was usually a prerogative of the upper levels of society. Monastic education, however, was open to all social classes. John of Ephesus' story of Simeon the Mountaineer, to which we have already referred, can be read as an aggressive educational program for the nonelite. After the forcible tonsuring of their children, the parents were outraged not only by the holy man's presumption but also by the loss of their children as valuable familial assets as well as sources of emotional well-being. Simeon's counterargument is strikingly economic: only if the children stay with him will they benefit their parents. For those who remained, "He made tablets for writing, and wrote for them; and thus he would thenceforth frequently sit with patience as in a school (*schole*) and would teach them, boys and girls together" (*Lives of the Eastern Saints*, trans. Brooks 1923: 242–6). This story insists on the continuity between work and school: the children exchange their labor on the mountains for Christian education. Instead of producing an immediately marketable product, children work in ways that produce themselves as the embodied form of societal investment—what, in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, might be seen as forms of capital (1984: 99–168). This kind of monastic commitment to investing in the future had a far-reaching impact on family life.

THE NONIDEAL CHILD

With the rise of Christianity came a shift in how family life was viewed. Already in the gospels, we find praise of the celibate life (Matthew 19:10–12; Luke 20:34–6). As the ascetic movement gained momentum in the fourth century, the good of children came into question (Vuolanto 2005; Evans Grubbs 2009b: 206–13). While only heretical groups openly condemned childbearing, many ascetically minded Christians devalued the act of having children. These strident voices are unlikely to have expressed the opinion of the majority, which no doubt held fast to "the age-old traditions of marriage and child bearing" (Evans

Grubbs 2009b: 207), but they left an indelible imprint on Christian ideology. Exhortations like the following are common in patristic literature:

Brethren, let us leave marriage and the raising of children to those whose eyes are towards earth, who long for the things of the present and take no thought for that which is to come; who do not strive to possess the good things of eternity and are unable to disentangle themselves from the ephemera of this world. (John Moschus *Prat. spir.*, 152 with Wortley 1992: 127)

As the tangible result of sexual activity, children became associated with culpable sensual indulgence. Even while staunchly defending the goodness of marriage, primarily on the basis of the production of children, Augustine worries about concupiscence (*De bon. conjug.*, *De nuptiis et concup.*). Jerome, however, voices the ascetic valuation sharply. Commenting on Jesus' parable of the hundred-fold, sixty-fold, and thirty-fold harvest, he opines that the hundred-fold harvest belongs to virgins, the sixty-fold to widows, and only the thirty-fold to married women (*Adv. Iovin.* 1.3; cf. *Ep.* 22.20). While licit, marrying and having children were not the highest form of Christian life.

Hagiography suggests that ascetic fervor led some parents to abandon their children (Clarke 1994: 1–4). The elite example of Paula is often cited, who, having decided to embrace the ascetic life, embarked for Palestine, leaving her children behind. Jerome lingers over the scene on the quay:

On the shore the little Toxotius stretched forth his hands in entreaty, while Rufina, now grown up, with silent sobs besought her mother to wait until she should be married. But still Paula's eyes were dry as she turned them heavenwards; and she overcame her love for her children by her love for God. She knew herself no more as a mother, that she might approve herself a handmaid of Christ. (*Ep.* 108.6, trans. *NPNF*, 197; cf. August. *Ep.* 262)

A more sober index of the same phenomenon is supplied by canon 15 from the synod at Gangra (held in 340 CE, on the edge of Armenia) that anathematized parents who "abandon their own children and neglect to feed them . . . on the pretext of religious observance."⁸ From Egypt comes an arresting sequel to such acts of renunciation. When a man named Carion decided to adopt the solitary monastic life, he left behind a wife and two small children. After famine struck the area, his wife brought his children out to him. She said to him:

"You have become a monk and now there is a famine; who is going to feed your children?" Abba Carion said to her, "Send them to me." The woman said to the children, "Go to your father." When they got close to their father, the little girl ran back to her mother but the boy stayed with his father. Then the old man said to his wife, "That is good. Take the little girl and depart; I will look after the boy." (*Apophth. patr.* Carion, 2, trans. Ward 1984: 117; cf. *Sisoës* 10)

⁸ Canon 15, Mansi 2.110; Boswell 1988: 163–4, 195. Precept 143 of the Pachomian Rules envisions that a brother might need to visit the women's monastery across the river to speak with "the mother of his children" (Veilleux 1981: 2.166–7).

We are not told what happens to the girl and her mother, but Carion raises the boy as a monk. Things do not go well. As Zacharias matures, suspicions about the two men's relationship trouble the community and are quelled only by Zacharias' drastic act of disfigurement: he submerged himself in a nitrous lake until "his body changed and he became like a leper." The story is preserved as a tribute to the boy's sanctity, but to us it discloses the troubling disregard of one would-be monk for the welfare of his children as well as the persistence of pederastic desire in monastic communities.

Other sayings corroborate this attraction: "whoever gorges himself and talks with a boy," commented John Colobos "has already in his thought committed fornication with him" (*Apophth. patr.*, John Colobos, 4; cf. Macarius, 24). The literature of the desert preserves stories of actual sexual encounters, but these are relatively few. A far more frequent topic is the problem of desire (*Apophth. patr.*, John the Persian, 1, Carion, 3, Matoes, 11, Poemen 176; Clark 1988; Brakke 2006: 159–75). Like women, the mere presence of boys was seen as posing a threat to monastic settlements. Thus, when the youthful Eudemon tried to join the community, Paphnutius rejected him, saying: "I do not allow the face of a woman to dwell in Scetis..." (*Apophth. patr.*, Eudemon 1; cf. Isaac, 5; cf. Cyr. S. V. *Euthym.* 26.1–3; *V. Sab.* 91.5–15, 113.23–114.3, 171.8–18). A locale where there were boys was no place for monks: whenever Macarius' disciples saw young children, they were "to take up [their] sheep-skins and go away" (*Apophth. patr.*, Macarius 5).

A different set of ascetic concerns troubled Chrysostom. For him, children are associated less with sexual desire than with pressing financial concerns. He complains that parents cite their obligation to their children as a rationale for conserving their goods and neglecting the needs of the poor (*Paen.* 3; *Hom. in Mt.* 59.6–9). As a symbol of family continuity in all its materiality, children embody the difference between monastic and worldly life. To the preacher's repeated exhortations to invest in spiritual pursuits, parents protest that such activities are not for them, "because they are married and have children and the care of a household" (*Hom. in Mt.* 2.5).

Closely allied with material concerns are the passions. And it is thus as an image of the sorry plight of persons in the grip of unrestrained passion that Chrysostom most often invokes the child:

For nothing is so eager for vengeance as a childish mind. For children are tyrannized by anger, since it is an irrational passion and there is much irrationality and a total absence of reasoning at that age. The tyranny of anger is so great that often after tripping and getting up again, they are so upset that they slap their knee or overturn the footstool to soothe their pain and quench their rage.... For all the passions are tyrannous in children, since they do not yet have any way to control them: vainglory, desire, irrationality, anger, envy. (*Hom. in Colos.* 4.4, PG 62.330)

Nothing could be further from the lineaments of the ideal child, created by the same preacher, than this pejorative portrait. Its purpose is to present not a standard to which all humans should strive but rather a diagnostic description of untutored humanity. In Chrysostom, such descriptions primarily serve an ethical agenda: they are designed to shame adult listeners into moral renovation.

In Augustine, however, such unsparing portraits are used to buttress theological doctrine. Augustine's vivid belief in an original sin that tainted the soul from the first moment of conception caused him to reject the idea of childish innocence. Certainly, the ability of infants to sin was less, but their inclination to sin differed in no way from that of adults. Thus, it was entirely appropriate that the church baptized babies "for the remission of sins": although they had committed no personal sins, they had inherited some vestige of the first couple's sin (*De nuptiis et concup.* 1.21–2; *De peccat. merit.* 1.39; cf. *De bapt.* 4.24.3). Pelagius and his followers vehemently rejected this innovative doctrine, although they too supported infant baptism as a rite that strengthened as well as initiated a child into the community (*De gratia Christi* 1.35–6, 41; cf. Chrysost. *Ad neophytos* 3.6; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 40.28). As the Pelagian controversy developed, the question of what happens to babies who die unbaptized became central (Clark 1992: 194–244).

CONCLUSION

Christianity made a discernible impact on the lives of children. From a very early date, children could be fully initiated into the church and even ordained to specialized offices. New feasts, introduced during the fourth and fifth centuries, celebrated the lives and witness of special children. But even the briefest and most ordinary life had value, preachers insisted, and thus bishops began to organize orphanages. Whether as orphans or oblates, children were also eligible to enter religious life, where enhanced educational opportunities often awaited them.

More signally, Christian scriptures invited sustained reflection on "the child." The results of this deliberation were notably ambivalent. On one hand, children were praised as ideal disciples and seen as possessing ascetic virtues "by nature." On the other hand, they were regarded as tangible signs of unrestrained passion and worldly concern: the epitome of a lack of virtue. In both cases, however, the image was used primarily to shame and correct adults. It is this pressing issue of formation that makes "the child" such a pervasive category of thought in early Christian ethical writings. In more doctrinal works, this same ambivalent figure was used to explore basic human nature (especially openness to sin and grace) and to address the pressing question of innocent suffering and the justice of God.

Above all, the small vignettes preserved in early Christian writings, especially homilies and hagiography, allow us glimpses into a late antique world where children were a normal and persistent presence.

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CHAPTER 28

ELITE CHILDREN, SOCIALIZATION, AND AGENCY IN THE LATE ROMAN WORLD

VILLE VUOLANTO

INTRODUCTION

TRANSMISSION of cultural and social norms and practices to succeeding generations is the cornerstone of continuity for families and other communities. These processes start right at birth, taking place not only in formal education but also through different kinds of social practices. This chapter tracks children's socialization process and their roles and responsibilities in family dynamics. How did children become members of the Greco-Roman elites of late antiquity?

In studying childhood socialization there is a danger of seeing children as passive objects of various socializing forces. This would make the history of children into the history of educators, parents, and other socializing agents. In recent studies on modern childhood the stress has shifted from childhood socialization to agency-based theories; the claim is that children have an active role in their growing and learning processes, transforming and renewing the cultural heritage they were born into (Valentine 2011; James and James 2004: 23–7, 37–40). However, among Roman historians, children's socialization in everyday life, through their own agency and daily interaction with household members, has received only marginal attention.¹

Childhood and “child” are socially constructed and culturally conditioned notions. Therefore, to study children—not merely adult views about childhood—the starting

¹ See, however, Bradley 1994; Rawson 2003: 153–7, 269–80; Aasgaard 2009; Horn and Martens 2009: 268–72, 291–300; Harders 2010; Vuolanto 2010; Osgood 2011: 74–9; see also McWilliam in this volume.

point here is to perceive childhood as a performative phase of life: children become children in certain cultural contexts by their own repeated acts, which depend on social conventions. Despite the social and cultural constraints, there is a place for change and resistance, as individuals fulfill expectations incompletely and according to their own temperament.² Even though the nature of the sources makes it difficult to study personal agency and experiences of Roman children, the idea of performative childhood focuses this chapter on the activities of the children and their ways of adapting to changing environments. The emphasis is on extracurriculum (even extraeducational) impulses and on children's own initiative rather than on the literary educational system. In this, my approach differs from most previous studies, such as that of Teresa Morgan (2011: 505), who defines socialization as the set of activities that children are *taught* to equip them to function in their society.

In the period under scrutiny, from the late fourth to late fifth centuries CE, Christian elites were pondering questions of social and cultural enculturation and differentiation. Ecclesiastical writers aimed to influence the learning processes within families and redefine the roles of family members, supplying the social historian with materials not available from earlier periods (see Leyerle in this volume). However, many accounts of late Roman children are normative tracts on how to educate certain children properly. These kinds of sources have to be read with caution—they depict not children's life but a view of childhood. Another source of material is biographical texts, inclined to hagiography or autobiographic self-promotion, portraying their protagonists as heroes of their respective philosophies. These texts require a reading that pays attention to themes and ideas the writers themselves had taken for granted and often serve only as background for their actual argumentation directed toward other (moral, theological) ends.

The present chapter is primarily concerned with the curial families (members of the town councils). Among our informants, Augustine had a rather modest background, whereas Ausonius and Libanius, for example, represent the wealthiest local families, and Paulinus of Pella was of senatorial status. Further diversity is due to the fact that most of our informants promoted ascetic ideals (Jerome, John Chrysostom, the Cappadocians), whereas some, like Ausonius, were laymen, and Libanius even a non-Christian; furthermore, the authors come from as far apart as Syria, North Africa, Gaul, and Italy. Thus, a further aim for the present chapter is to determine if there are to be found any differences in childhood socialization due to social standing, religious conviction, or geographical area.

I shall track socialization and agency by looking at the ways elite children used their time. What were the limits of children's agency in response to the activity and influence of parents and other socializing agents? Much attention will be given to the interaction of children with other people. It should be noted that in most cases the children are in their early teens, or a little younger—not toddlers in any case. I start my inquiry with the

² For socialization and agency, see Katajala-Peltomaa and Vuolanto 2011; the idea of performative childhood is derived from Butler 1990; Laz 1998.

most obvious persons involved, the parents, and then move to wider household contexts with nurses, tutors, teachers, and slaves. The latter sections will deal with the importance of other relatives and age peers in the lives of elite children.

CHILDREN AND PATERNAL AUTHORITY

In late antiquity, as earlier in the Roman world, children were in theory strictly under the control of their father. In his classic study Brent Shaw (1987: 17–24) presented the life situation of children of the local elites in a bleak light. Fathers brought up, or disciplined and domesticated, their sons to continue the household and its property and to support them in old age. In this, fear of disinheritance and corporal punishments were the main methods. Social control was a persistent feature, even if paternal severity was to be counterbalanced by love and mutual *pietas*. Discipline did not mean that fathers did not have the best interests of their sons at heart (cf. Nathan 2000: 144–9).

This ideal is clearly present in the autobiographic narratives of late antiquity. Although John Chrysostom tried to find a middle ground in advising that sons should “rather at all times fear blows but not receive them,” fathers were authoritative figures, who used both corporal punishments and other measures, like forbidding the child to leave the house or refusing the child a place at dinner (*De inani glor.* 30, 39; O’Roark 1999: 70–2). Fathers were represented as having high hopes for their progeny: their learning and career made sons sources of honor to their fathers and, pointedly, also providers of the next generation for their lineage. Sons were to carry on the family’s reputation and name and to bury their parents in the proper way.³

Both Christian and non-Christian late Roman family ideals expected the father to be in charge of all the upbringing. Especially in regard to the upbringing of boys, a mother’s role was to be secondary, except for earliest childhood (Salzman 2002: 155–61). Late antique male writers were less concerned about responsibilities toward daughters. The father’s duty was to provide them with suitable nurses and other educators and marry them off, but otherwise it was the mother who was to teach daughters the essential skills of being a housewife and a good mother.⁴

Elite male writers of the earlier Roman world took it for granted that children were passive beings who could be molded like wax in the hands of a competent educator: “the child is socialized almost entirely by parents and teachers” (Morgan 2011: 515). This idea predominated also in late antiquity: “good precepts are impressed on the soul when it is still tender . . . like a waxen seal” (Joh. Chrysost. *De inani gloria et de educandis liberis* 20,

³ Augustin. *Conf.* 2.3.5–8; Paulin. Pella *Euch.* 154–5, 176–86; Ausonius *Ep.* 21, 1–5; *Ep.* 22 poem l. 35–8; Greg. Naz. *Carm.* 2.1.11.506–14, with Vuolanto 2009: 290–1.

⁴ Jerome *Ep.* 107, 128; Joh. Chrysost. *Quales ducendae* 3.9, in *PG* 51.239–40; *De virginitate* 73, in Grillet 1966; *Inani glor.* 17, 41, 90, with O’Roark 1999: 79–80.

22–29, in Malingrey 1972). It was inevitable that a father's influence became visible in his children.

How far does this idealized picture coincide with what can be deduced of actual interaction between family members? For education, Synesius of Cyrene (*Dio, vel de ipsius vitae instituto* 4 in Lamoureux and Aujoulat 2004) aimed at personally taking care of the “preparatory teaching” of his son, and Symmachus (*Ep.* 3.20 in Callu 1982) even started to relearn Greek together with his son. However, although Chrysostom, for example, urged fathers personally to tell stories to their sons and claimed that “every man takes the greatest pains to train his son in the arts and literature and speech” (*Inani glor.* 18 (quote), 39–43), the direct involvement of elite fathers seems not to have been usual. The actual schooling of children was given to professional rearers and teachers—the selection of whom was, ideally, in the hands of fathers (Salzman 2002: 158–9), even if this was not always the case in reality (e.g., Jerome *Ep.* 107.4).

Much of the cultural knowledge was acquired not from schooling but from living experience and imitation. As in earlier Rome, this was especially true with religious practices (Prescendi 2010: 76–9, 92–3); the influence of different actors in the upbringing of their children is shown best in the religious upbringing. The basic skills and knowledge of this field were to be acquired informally at home. Indeed, Prudentius complained that traditional beliefs and customs did not wane, as children “drank in the error with their first milk” by watching their mothers worshipping and praying, and taking part in religious practices with their nurses (c. *Symm.* 1.197–232; see also Augustin. *Conf.* 1.9.14–5).

Children also participated in public religious practice. Even babies, if baptized, received the Eucharist with their families (Horn and Martens 2009: 291–4 with, e.g., Augustin. *Ep.* 98.4). It seems, however, that most children were baptized only later in life. Gregory of Nazianzus, for example, was promised to God before his birth but was baptized at the age of twenty (*Carmina* 2.1.1.308, 320; 2.1.11.121–209, in Tuilier et al. 2004; see also Leyerle in this volume). Augustine complains that parents bring their unhealthy children to baptism because they believe this will cure them. As a child, he himself was suddenly taken ill with a stomach ailment. In that situation, he begged for baptism from his mother, but, as he soon recovered, the baptism was postponed (*Ep.* 98.5; *Conf.* 1.11.17).

Ideally it was the father's responsibility to take children to church, but this was not always the case (Joh. Chrysost. *Inani glor.* 41; Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 157.2). Augustine, a catechumen since infancy, participated regularly in liturgy throughout his childhood, but as his father was not a Christian he was introduced to the life of the church and liturgy by his mother (*Conf.* 1.11.17, 3.3.5). For consecrated virgins, it would have been natural to be escorted to church by women, especially their mother (e.g., Jerome *Ep.* 107.9). The normative tracts on education also urge parents to take care that their children learn hymns (Joh. Chrysost. *Inani glor.* 34, 60; Jerome *Ep.* 107.4, 128.1). Children's socialization to religious practices also included participation in funerary rituals and meals with their families (Tulloch 2011: 562). All this would have given children, both girls and boys, the necessary skills and thus security in their participation in religious practices

and community life, binding them to certain values and group identity (Prescendi 2010: 78–9; Vuolanto 2010: 147, 150).

Late antique writers were conscious of the need to offer pleasant experiences for children to motivate them to learn and to adopt certain skills and values. John Chrysostom pointed out that it was not enough to make the church a familiar place for the child, but elite boys should often see the bishop and be praised by him—and the father should show his pride in this (*Inani glor.* 80). Jerome recommended ivory letters be made for a girl to make reading lessons enjoyable and that every kind of rewards, like sweets, flowers, and dolls, be introduced to make her practice more—and not to forget recreation afterwards with kisses and caresses from her mother and relatives (*Ep.* 128.1, 107.4, with Horn 2005: 104; see also Leyerle in this volume). Parents were to tell their sons pleasant stories in the midst of studying, promise them cakes or money, and show them affection when directing them (Joh. Chrysost. *Inani glor.* 39, 77–8, with Leyerle 1997: 256–7).

Discussions about entering into asceticism offer a special case regarding paternal authority. Although the discourse of parents opposing their children's yearning to become ascetics dominates Christian biographic narratives of late antiquity, there are very few traces of actual conflicts. If disagreements existed and children were set against their parents' resolution, they were to be solved by waiting and using evasion tactics. For example Stagirius, a friend of John Chrysostom, managed to join a monastic community despite the opposition of the father, as he was able to conceal what he had done with the help of his mother. By no means were domestic conflicts to become public matters.⁵

Late antique authors often depict the role of fathers with some ambivalence, and there is regularly a certain distancing between sons and their fathers. Stagirius is a case in point, and Augustine's difficult relationship with his father is well-known. His father's death, for example, is referred to only in passing (*Conf.* 3.4.7; 9.9.19 with O'Donnell 2005: 57–8). Gregory of Nazianzus, likewise, depicts his father as a distant character tyrannizing his son, his virtues depending on the good influence his wife had on him (Hägg 2006: 145–6). Libanius notes that he would have found himself in the local town council or in the imperial bureaucracy if his father had reached old age—although Libanius carefully avoids giving the impression that he was happy that his father died young (*Autobiogr.* 1.6, in Norman 1965; see also Ausonius *Parentalia* 1, 2.5). Paulinus of Pella is exceptional here, presenting his relationship with his father as affectionate, both during his teenage years, in hunting and other pastimes, and later upon his father's death, calling his father his “dear comrade” and claiming that their relationship surpassed the friendship of age peers (*Eucharisticon* 154–5, 176–86, 242–7, in Moussy 1974). He gives equal credit for his education to his father and mother: after he had learned the alphabet, his parents made sure he would learn “to shun the ten special marks of ignorance” and to avoid vices.⁶

⁵ *Ad Stagirium* 1.1, in PG 47.426. See, however, Augustin. *Ep.* 35.4. For discussion, see Vuolanto 2009: 259–80.

⁶ *Euch.* 60–7, 89–97, with Evans Grubbs 2009: 217–8. See also Katz 2007 on Jerome and girls' education and Osgood 2010 on Paulinus and boys' education.

THE ROLE OF MOTHERS

The harsh demographic realities meant that there were plenty of fatherless children (Scheidel 2009; see also Huebner in this volume). In these cases the role of the mother is depicted as self-evident; legal guardians do not feature in Roman childhood stories—presumably because guardians did not live with their wards (*pupilli*), nor did they have everyday responsibilities toward them. Libanius, for example, highlighted his mother's role in his education, as the person in charge of both the financial costs of his upbringing and the educational principles to be used. Libanius' uncles might have had roles as legal guardians, and certainly his mother listened to their opinions; however, it was the mother who had the decisive role. Libanius claims that "she thought that a loving mother should never sadden her children in any way." Even if he neglected his studies, he was not punished because of this leniency, and Libanius was able to be "his own guardian" (*Autobiogr.* 4–5, 12, 27). Indeed, the list of late antique elite widows depicted as having taken care of the upbringing and education of their children is a long one.⁷

Writers portray the education of children as depending on mothers even on many occasions when the fathers were still alive. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, for example, only occasionally mentions his father. Although his father was the one who went around asking hermits to intercede so that he and his wife could have children, it was the mother who dedicated the future child, Theodoret, to God. During his childhood his mother continually told him stories about the family history, took her son along to visit the hermits, and sent Theodoret once a week to obtain a blessing from a nearby hermit by himself. It was his mother who taught Theodoret to rely on the ascetics and their relics (*Hist. relig.* 9.4, 9.9–15, 13.3, 13.16–18, in Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen 1977).

Similarly, Gregory of Nazianzus's mother Nonna offered him to God immediately at birth. Gregory does not tire of highlighting his mother's dedication to him and her influence on his future spiritual strivings (*Carm.* 2.1.1.118–22; 424–44; 2.1.11.51–94, with Van Dam 2003: 88–93). Monica's influence on her son Augustine is well-known, as she tried to bring him up as a Christian, prayed for him year after year, and provided him with financial support in his studies (*Conf.* 3.4.7–8, 9.9–13, with Clark 1999: 14–5). Emmelia, the mother of Macrina, Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa, is depicted in a similar manner. According to Gregory, she was a paradigm of simple piety. Like Monica, Emmelia took care of both the religious and secular education of her children, praying and reciting psalms to Macrina. As in the other cases mentioned, the role of Gregory's father is minimal—he is mentioned as active only when Macrina is about to be married off by her parents (*Vita Macrinae* 2–7, 11, 13, in Maraval 1971, with Van Dam 2003: 100–2).

⁷ See following cases with, for example, John Chrysostom *De sacerdotio* 1.5, in Malingrey 1980; Ambrose *Exhortatio virginitatis* in *PL* 16.351–80; Jerome, *Ep.* 7–8; Augustin. *Ep.* 3*; Jerome *Ep.* 108; Augustin. *Ep.* 188 and Jerome *Ep.* 130; Jerome *Ep.* 24, 127.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that fathers were not responsible for the religious upbringing of their children (cf. Nathan 2000: 149, 153–4). However, it was socially accepted and normal for mothers to do this. Although little Pacatula's father took the initiative in asking advice for bringing her up in the virginal life, Jerome directs his reply to her mother. It was she who was to take the practical measures (*Ep.* 128; see also *Ep.* 107 on Paula the Younger). Similarly, in the case of Florentina, both of the parents were alive, but the mother was in charge of the virgin's religious education and had asked Augustine for advice (Augustin. *Ep.* 266). Even if the general assumption in the late Roman world was that the father would be responsible for the religious choices of his sons (Salzman 2002: 158–9), his responsibility was often limited to supervising. As initiation into this field happened in informal contexts inside the households, the *de facto* authority mothers had over the raising of their children is especially highlighted in religious upbringing. In late antiquity there even seems to be a correlation between the pronounced role of the mother during childhood and the tendency of these children to stay unmarried and end up in intellectual or ecclesiastical careers.

HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD

Elite children did not need to work to earn their living, as those from the lower classes did, but their parents still might hold that some tasks would be useful for introducing the children into their future roles. That Theodoret carried food to the hermits on the mountain was more part of his religious upbringing than work (*Hist. Relig.* 13.3), and using one's protégés or sons of a relative to carry letters would not only show honor for the addressee but also make children part of public life and enable them to meet important acquaintances (Bas. *Ep.* 260.1).

Fathers took care of introducing their sons to the public life of the cities. A casual depiction of a schoolboy's day from a schoolbook, most probably from fourth-century Gaul, includes the father taking his son to the forum to see taxation rituals, private juridical matters, and public trials (Dionisotti 1982: 104–5, ll. 70–7). Another feature of everyday public life was the baths; both Augustine in North Africa and the Gallic schoolbook indicate that at least teenage boys, if not younger ones, would visit baths outside home regularly. Augustine visited them with his father; the schoolbook implies a visit with a slave (Dionisotti 1982: 102–3, ll. 55–64; Augustin. *Conf.* 2.3.6).

Boys' introduction to the public sphere also involved different kinds of spectacles (*ludi*), theater, and gladiator shows. Children would attend these with their fathers (Hilarius of Arles *Vita Honorati* 6.1, in Valentin 1977), but later on in their teens they could take in these shows on their own. Libanius even mentions watching gladiator shows as his hobby before he “fell in love with rhetoric” at the age of fifteen (*Autobiogr.*, 4–5), and Basil casually implies children's presence at athletic contests (Bas. *Ep.* 66). It is indeed “difficult to know what emotions and behavioral models children transferred from the amphitheatre to the rest of their lives” (Rawson 2003: 331–2, with Horn

2009: 130), but I would suggest that the impact of the contacts and interaction with their social peers during these shows was equally important for the socialization processes. This is not to underestimate the addictiveness of watching these violent acts as such (see, e.g., Augustin. *Conf.* 6.7.12, 6.8.13 on Alypius).

Many contemporary authors expressed a negative attitude toward shows and theater. Augustine refers to spectacles in general taking children away from their studies; he might have written this based on his personal experience, as he mentions having followed different kinds of shows in his youth (*Conf.* 1.10.16, 1.18.30; *Enarr. in Ps.* 147.7). John Chrysostom often mentions theater in connection with children, on the assumption that fathers casually took children there. He is hostile to this: theater and spectacles are for slaves, and the father should instead take his son out in the evening to make fun of the spectators, especially the old men, as they return home (*Inani glor.* 56, 77, 78; *Hom. 3 in Joh.* 1 in PG 59.37–8; *De Anna sermo* 1.6). On the other hand, Synesius of Cyrene mentions comedies as an alternative for the congested mind after studying “weighty doctrines” (*Dio* 4). Theater clearly was a familiar place for boys and young men.

Aristocratic fathers seem to have regularly hunted with their teenage sons, a pastime mentioned as a remedy not only for a weak body but also for a too otherworldly mind-set and a skill needed in elite social life (Paulin. *Euch.* 121–53; Hil. *Arel. vita Honor.* 6). The centrality of hunting in elite youth culture appears also in the list of property Paulinus of Pella had at his disposal at the age of fifteen: a fine horse bedecked with special trappings, a tall groom, a swift hound, a shapely hawk, and a tinseled ball in games of pitching (*Euch.* 143). Similarly, Gregory of Nazianzus lists the entertainments of most elite youth while claiming that his friend Basil of Caesarea did not take part in them: shooting hares, running down fawn, hunting deer, and breaking young horses (*Oratio* 43.12, in Bernardi 1992; also Sidon. *Apoll. Ep.* 3.3.2).

Mothers, in turn, were to offer a model of how to administer a household. John Chrysostom, for example, describes a girl imitating her mother in taking care of the household: she has her small treasures in a small case that she can lock in a closet and then guard the key (*Virg.* 73). Elite parents used also little tasks to introduce their daughters to the working of a household and to adult responsibilities. Monica's parents used to send her as a young girl to the cellar to draw wine from the cask “as was the custom” (Augustin. *Conf.* 9.8.17–8). Similarly, Macrina is depicted as being engaged in household tasks and becoming a proficient woolworker even before she reached marriageable age. She even prepared meals for her mother with her own hands (Greg. Nyss. *Vita Macrinae* 3–4). Part of the attraction of a virginal life as promoted by the ecclesiastical writers was that a girl would never leave her parents but would contribute to their parents' welfare at home.⁸ Differences between daughters and sons are evident, reflecting the gendered expectations for future family roles.

⁸ Ambr. *De virginibus* 1.7.32, in Cazzaniga 1954; *Inst. virg.* 1.1, 17.107, in PL 16.305A, 331B; Joh. Chrysost. *Adv. oppugn. vit. mon.* 2.9, in PG 47.345–6.

HOUSEHOLD STAFF AND SCHOOLING

Domestic staff and slaves were always present in elite households, and children were constantly in contact with them. The Gallic schoolbook implies that on returning home the elite boy should greet his parents, grandparents, siblings, “and all cognates, the maternal uncle and aunt, the nurse and the rearer, the manager of the household, all fellow freedmen, gatekeeper, any household member, neighbors, all the friends, all living there, tenants of the *insulae*, eunuchs” (Dionisotti 1982: 98 lines 15–7; see also Jerome *Ep.* 14.3). And whenever children left the safe realm of their households, they were accompanied and escorted by their slaves or teachers. As Chrysostom was relating a children’s story about Esau and Jacob and pointing out how Jacob fled to desert alone, he added that “he had no one with him, no slave or nurse or tutor or anyone else” (*Inani glor.* 46). That there were no family members involved should have been clear for the children by the word “alone”—but he had to specifically exclude the other household members.

This reality led ecclesiastical writers to warn constantly against possible bad influences from less than civilized servants, tutors, or nurses of servile background. In particular, the tales and stories that children inevitably would hear would corrupt them, socializing them to a servile way of life. As it was impossible to prevent children from interaction with the other household members, the father should select and educate the servants himself and separate them from the other staff and “worldly” associates (Joh. Chrysost. *Inani glor.* 37–53, 61; Jerome *Ep.* 107.4). Indeed, if the tutor and servants guarded a child’s speech, Chrysostom asserts that in two months the child would stop speaking evil (*Inani glor.* 32–3). On the other hand, it was through servants that a certain continuity could be achieved, like, for instance, the servant taking care of Monica’s upbringing who had already played with Monica’s father when he was a little boy (Augustin. *Conf.* 9.8.17).

Wet nurses feature in late antique texts as symbols of homeliness (see also Leyerle in this volume). For Augustine, the milk of his mother and his wet nurse are the first consolations and gifts of God for a human being in this world. In fact, in the early pages of *Confessions*, when early childhood is under discussion, mothers and wet nurses appear as parallel positive figures (1.6–1.7; also Jerome *Ep.* 3.5). Ausonius even contrasts wet nurses to mothers: “A child who shrinks from its mother will love its nurse’s wrinkles” (*Ep.* 22, poem lines 17–19). Nurses were constant companions for the girls, and even legislation assumed slave nurses to have strong influence in the lives of girls even of marriageable age (Jerome *Ep.* 107.4; *CTheod.* 9.24.1.1). Nurses are mentioned also as important agents through which the knowledge of religious practices is transmitted to children (Prud. *C. Symm.* 1.197–232).

This image seems to have had relevance in lived reality, too. Augustine contrasts his experiences of learning Greek, fearfully, with his parents laughing at him as he prayed to God that he would not be whipped, with the way he learned Latin in his infancy, “by keeping my ears open while my nurses fondled me and everyone laughed and played happily with me.” His mother Monica gave credit for her good upbringing, in turn, not

to her mother but to an aged slave nurse, in whose care the children of the household were securely placed (Augustin. *Conf.* 1.9.14–5, 14.23, 9.8.17). Children were given to nurses to take care of in circumstances when parents were unable to stay with them, and nurses' customary nearness to children shows in that they were sleeping with the infants and soothing them at nights.⁹ Thus, if ecclesiastical writers did feel opposition or ambivalence toward the use of nurses (Shaw 1987: 42; Nathan 2000: 150), this does not show in everyday life: nurses were the most natural choices to be responsible for the child after the parents. As in the earlier empire (Bradley 1994: 143, 148–52), nurses were expected to play and tell stories to late antique elite children, to initiate them into learning, and to function as important sources of affective interaction and cultural knowledge.

Of the everyday interaction between the free children and household slaves, a telling example is Augustine's story of his mother as a young girl fetching wine: she used to seize the opportunity to drink it secretly. Only when Augustine refers to a slave girl reproaching her young mistress as a drunkard does it come out that Monica was not alone in the cellar but was in the company of a handmaid, who is introduced as having been her personal servant, constantly in her company (*Conf.* 9.8.18). Aristocratic virgins seem to have considered it natural to bring their own maids with them from their old households when entering ascetic communities. For Jerome, this was the very symbol of their former lifestyle (Jerome *Ep.* 108.20). John Chrysostom also reminds parents not to overlook their child maltreating slaves. Refraining from anger toward slaves would be the most natural way of teaching self-mastery and "philosophical disposition" to children (*Inani glor.* 31, 67, 69, 73–4). On the other hand, he advises fathers to teach their children not to demand from servants such services as they can do themselves. As an example Chrysostom gives cooking: a free man cannot cook for himself, but a boy should not let slaves wash his feet, hand him his coat, or serve him in the bath (*Inani glor.* 70).

Late antique Christianity did not create any alternative curriculum to the traditional Greco-Roman education, and Christian children were supposed to take part in the customary secular schooling (Nathan 2000: 141–2; Morgan 2011: 519; see also Bloomer in this volume). In the stories of childhood, different kinds of educators and teachers frequently appear as background figures, unfortunately with little specific information about their influence (e.g., Lib. *Autobiogr.* 12; Jerome *Ep.* 128.3; Paulinus of Pella *Euch.* 68–80, 117). Gregory of Nazianzus' seemingly long time pedagogue and guide, Carterius, even followed him to Athens when he started his studies (*Anth. Pal.* 8.142–6). Ausonius mentions the *magister* of his grandchild correcting and training his reading and pronunciation, and, on other occasions, seems to refer to his own experiences in urging his grandson not to be afraid of the stern discipline maintained by the teachers (*Ep.* 21, 1–5; *Ep.* 22, poem lines 12–28; also Augustin. *Conf.* 1.9.30, 1.9.14–5, 1.14.23).

⁹ Augustin. *Ep.* 98.4; Paulin. Pell. *Euch.*, 27–32; Augustin. *Ep.* 194.7.32; Arnobius *Ad nationes* 2.39.

The narratives of Augustine and Ausonius on their education highlight the acts of violence, flogging and beating, strikes of stripes, rod and birches. Further, Libanius claims that when he neglected his studies his pedagogues could not intervene because his mother did not want him to be beaten (*Autobiogr.* 4–5). Jerome also mentions the fear of punishment in his brief memoirs of his childhood and refers to a dream he had as an adult in the desert, in which he was ordered to be whipped by the Great Schoolmaster as punishment for being a *ciceronianus* (*Apologia adversus libros Rufini* 1.30, in Lardet 1983; *Ep.* 22.30). In the autobiographic narratives the power of the teachers and fear of pain overshadows all other issues related to schooling, leading to problems in learning and children's antipathy for their early studies. The a priori assumption of late antique writers that children would inevitably confront harsh discipline and even rage on the part of their teachers was not only a rhetorical topos (see Laes 2005, with Leyerle 1997: 256, 260–1). Similarly, in a fifth-century series of biographic mosaics, the protagonist, Kimbros, is depicted as being flogged by his pedagogue seemingly as a regular part of his education (Marinescu et al. 2007: 103 [illustration], 108–9; see also Sivan's chapter in this volume, fig. 26.1).

At least from the late fourth century onward it was possible, both in the East and West, to give elite children to ascetic communities and episcopal schools to be taken care of and educated. Augustine reports a case of an upper-class girl living under his guardianship whose suitors Augustine had to turn away, citing the girl's still young age and reluctance. This kind of education did not imply an ascetic vow as such, although some children did adopt this lifestyle.¹⁰

Some ecclesiastical writers acted as correspondence course teachers for the young ascetic recruits. Only seldom we hear, however, about actual interaction between religious professionals and the children. Theodoret is an exception: he relates that as a child he often sat on the knees of the nearby ascetic, Peter the Galatian, who gave him bread with raisins. The scene with homely nearness and sweetness of raisins is a perfect example of how a child would end up at having a positive view of a certain lifestyle and values (*Hist. relig.* 9.4). For Theodoret, these local pilgrimages to different ascetics continued throughout his childhood and youth, as he traveled in the mountains and outskirts of Antioch, meeting hermits (*Hist. relig.* 4.10, 8.15, 12.4, 13.16–18; also Joh. Chrysost. *Inani glor.* 78–9, Jerome *Ep.* 107.9).

RELATIVES

Parents were not the only kin to have influence on children and youth. Of late Roman authors, Ausonius gives most space to his relatives—not only because his poem *Parentalia* commemorates his deceased kin but also because he was brought up by

¹⁰ Augustin. *Ep.* 252–5; also, e.g., Joh. Chrysost. *Adv. oppugn. vit. mon.* 3.11, 18, in PG 47.366–7, 380–1. See further Guerreau-Jalabert 1999: 271–5; Miller 2003: 152–7; Kalogeras 2005.

relatives after the earliest childhood. Having been “torn from his mother’s breasts,” he got his early training under the stern but kindly rule of his maternal grandmother; later Ausonius wrote to his own grandchild claiming that grandchildren prefer grandparents to parents (*Parentalia* 5.9–10; *Ep.* 22 poem l. 17–9). He gives credit for his upbringing also to other relatives: his maternal uncle was another person who took charge of the earliest years of his life. Ausonius depicted his uncle not only as his “father and mother” but also as his teacher of rhetoric. He also honors two of his maternal aunts “as a son” (*Parentalia* 3.8–10, 3.19, 6.12, 25.9–10; see Evans Grubbs 2009: 202–3).

Although Ausonius’ literary output may have been unusual, his childhood experience evidently was not. The elite children of late antiquity seem often to have been separated from their parents—and this did not necessarily mean that parents were deceased, as the experiences of Ausonius, Basil of Caesarea, or little Toxotius (Jerome *Ep.* 108.6) show. In the absence of mother or father, grandparents were often in charge of bringing up the children and had a central importance in their grandchildren’s lives. For example, Ambrose credits Ambrosia’s vow of virginity not to her parents’ influence but to that of her grandfather Eusebius (*De instit. virg.* 1.1 in *PL* 16.305A; cf. Bas. *Ep.* 84.2; Jerome *Ep.* 130.4–5; Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 160). Jerome recalls his pleasant time on his grandmother’s lap, as a contrast to his enraged teacher who wanted him to attend to his lessons (*Apol. adv. Ruf.* 1.30). Having been in contact with one’s grandparents was an occasion for boasting and a guarantee of authentic family heritage. Basil of Caesarea, for example, invoked the memory of his grandmother, Macrina, to back up his claim of orthodoxy, stressing that she was responsible for his education and religious formation, acquainting him with the teachings of Gregory Thaumaturgus (*Ep.* 204.6; see also *Ep.* 210.1, 223.3).

Other relatives often mentioned are uncles and aunts, appearing as important persons in Ausonius’ life and also in the list of possible persons to be greeted when entering the family house in the Gallic schoolbook (Dionisotti 1982: 98 line 17). The virgin Eustochium had problems with her paternal uncle and his wife, who wanted her to dress according to her class, not as an ascetic; likewise, Melania the Younger’s aunt asked her not to wear a coarse woolen garment under her silk clothing (Jerome *Ep.* 107.5; *Life of Melania the Younger* 4). Augustine also, when he enumerates persons who should tame (*domare*) the young men, mentions the severity of the paternal uncle (Augustin. *Serm.* 302.21.19, in *PL* 38.1392–3). If the father was away or, as in Eustochium’s case, dead, his brother would be the person to take care of the interests of paternal kin.

Maternal uncles, in turn, played a major role in Libanius’ life. Because his father died young and the boy was brought up by his mother, the uncles served as the heads of the household one after another. It was the younger uncle’s permission that made it possible for Libanius to leave for Athens to study, although his mother opposed the plan and the older uncle, before his death, had sided with her (*Autobiogr.* 13; see also *Anth. Pal.* 8.131–8 on Gregory of Nazianzus’ maternal uncle).

Siblings appear often in the stories of family relationships in late antiquity, but their actual relationships with the protagonists are seldom described. Gregory of Nyssa writes with great respect about his elder brothers Basil and Naucratus and especially his sister Macrina (who not only seems to have been responsible for Gregory’s early education but

also is described as the spiritual teacher of the whole family) and with affection about his younger brother Peter, but he does not elaborate their personal relationships further (Van Dam 2003: 67–74). This is true also for Gregory of Nazianzus and his depiction of his brother Caesarius and sister Gorgonia, the latter of whom is called “a common counsellor not only of her own family but also of those about her” (Greg. Naz. *Oratio* 8, 11, in Calvet-Sebasti 1995, with Van Dam 2003: 93–6). Augustine mentions his brother only once in *Confessions* and his sister not at all (Martin 2001: 18–9). Libanius, likewise, does not mention his two brothers in the context of his childhood but later describes very emotionally the misfortunes and eventual death of the younger brother (*Autobiogr.* 197–204). It would be a mistake, therefore, to claim that siblings were of little importance or that the relationships broke down after leaving the parental home.

AGE PEERS AND (BAD) INFLUENCE

Late antique texts refer occasionally to children playing—or fighting (Joh. Chrysost. *Sac.* 6.13, with Leyerle 1997: 257)—together. Theodoret, for example, tells about a group of boys playing with a ball on the street. When it suddenly went between the legs of a donkey, the boys purified with fire the ball thus polluted. Adult society’s ideas of purity and impurity in observation of religious practices enabled the boys to imitate the rituals.¹¹

Another mid-fifth-century anecdote of the childhood of Athanasius of Alexandria presents us with a peer group in action. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, was walking on a beach when he saw a group of boys playing “church.” Alexander was amazed by the precision of the words and gestures of the young “bishop” presiding over his see and saying mass. The boys explained to him that Athanasius had baptized them as well, with the correct signs and formulas. Bishop Alexander was so convinced of the performance of his young parishioner that he forbade the rebaptism of his now Christian playmates. As the author of the story saw it, the astonishing element in this case was not the fact that children played at holding mass but the accurate and correct rites performed by a mere boy (*Socr. Hist. eccl.* 1.15, with Horn 2005: 113–4). Even if the historicity of this story may be questioned, it provides evidence for accepted ideas of children’s activities in adapting and evolving the considerations of the surrounding community and the importance of personal participation and imitation in learning. In part, the story can also be read as a tale concerning peer pressure, as all the children took part in playing Christian liturgy and ended up being baptized.

In the aforementioned cases, the social class of the children is left open. For Jerome, of local elite background from Stridon in Dalmatia, a child’s freedom of play took place on holidays but still in the confines of the household, as his remark on running about

¹¹ *Hist. eccl.* 4.13; see also Leyerle in this volume with Theodoret, *Hist. relig.* 9.9 on girls imitating the mad and the possessed.

among “the offices where slaves were at work” reveals (*Apol. adv. Ruf.* 1.30). Indeed, when the *magister* had given a day off and the school day ended, “shouting I went out” (*Clamatus exivi foras*, Dionisotti 1982: 101, line 42). However, elite schooling took place if not always in the confines of one’s own household then most often in other private houses (Morgan 2011: 517); the mental image of a classroom full of pupils of different background can be quite misleading, although the Gallic schoolbook mentions both *domus magistri* and *schola Graeca* as places for teaching to occur (Dionisotti 1982: 98, l. 18; 100, l. 30; see also Bloomer in this volume).

Augustine mentions having played ballgames with a friend instead of studying (*Conf.* 1.9.15, with 1.10.16). Higher up on the social ladder, Libanius recalls his unspecified play in the fields in his early teens and his hobby of raising doves but does not mention any friends (*Autobiogr.* 4–5). The schoolbook from Gaul mentions the possibility that a boy could go to the city with his friend. The implication is that the friends live in the same household or at least in the near vicinity; indeed, arriving home, the Gallic schoolboy would salute not only his family members and different categories of household staff but also all his friends (Dionisotti 1982: 98, ll. 16–7). Similarly, when John Chrysostom recommends that a father let the slaves provoke his son to test his ability to control his passion, he argues that this is necessary because the father himself would be too authoritative a figure to put the boy to a real test. The age peers, whether slave or free, would do this better (*Inani glor.* 68). The implication is again that the elite boy’s friends and age peers principally were from his own household. The only playmates who are singled out in the narratives concerning early childhood are servants of the household: a girl servant had carried Monica’s father on her back when he was a baby, “as older girls do with small children” (Augustine. *Conf.* 9.8.17), and Paulinus of Pella writes that he had learned Greek while playing with the household slaves (*Euch.* 75–8). In everyday interaction, the role of household staff seems to have been in general, more central in influencing aristocratic children than children’s age peers of the same social class.

Augustine, however, brings out the significance of peer groups. He took part in a gang of boys playing and wandering the streets of Thagaste in search of excitement. They pilfered from here and there and exchanged and sold to each other different kinds of small booty they had extracted from their parents or other citizens (Augustine. *Conf.* 1.19.30). A case of taking a huge load of pears from a nearby tree and dumping them out uneaten makes him ask why he and his companions ended up doing such a thing, causing no profit for themselves but only damage for others:

By myself I would not have committed that robbery. It was not the takings that attracted me but the raid itself, and yet to do it by myself would have been no fun and I should not have done it. This was friendship of a most unfriendly sort, bewitching my mind in an inexplicable way. (*Conf.* 2.8.16, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin)

Here one can see the power of a peer group to affect behavior and socialize to a certain subculture and, as Augustine also notes the strengthening of the sense of solidarity. Although the space that this episode takes up in the *Confessions* (2.4–10) is certainly not

commensurate to its importance for the life of Augustine, it not only offered him a first class example of the workings of sin in humankind but also reveals how an incident with contradictory experiences (of friendship, excitement, solidarity, and guilt) can imprint itself in the mind of a child. John Chrysostom also evokes the influence of peer culture, as he urges fathers to use peer pressure in education: if the boy yearns for spectacles and theater, the father should point out that none of his friends will go there. Fear and promises are less efficient in bringing up a boy than emulation (*Inani glor.* 77).

Elite girls appear seldom in the sources as active players. We have, naturally, the ideal guidelines given by John Chrysostom and Jerome: girls should keep at home and associate only with other girls, dreading even to play with boys—even their maid attendants should be separated from all worldly associates (Joh. Chrysost. *Sac.* 3.17; Jerome *Ep.* 22.16, 128.3, 107.3–4). However, within certain limits it was desirable for girls to have age peer contacts, and thus parents should acquire companions (pale and serious, not handsome) for them; peer rivalry and emulation would make the girls learn better (Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4). The separation of sexes might not have been as strict as the normative statements would imply (Horn 2005: 108), but still it seems that even for the “ordinary” elite girls the life sphere was limited to the household, where they lived under strict observation with age peers among the household slaves (Jerome *Ep.* 107.9–11; *Ep.* 14.3; Nathan 2000: 81–2). It is telling that when John Chrysostom discusses the problems in protecting from all worldly influences virgins vowed to God, his starting point is the everyday experience of a father watching over his daughter: if she ever goes out, it is only at dusk; she never comes into the presence of men as her father represents her in everything; her mother, nurse, and maids help him in this guardianship. Even a dedicated virgin would have more reasons (religious services, daily provisions) to leave her house—and she is more independent (*Sac.* 3.17). As a result, “young girls and young women spent most of their lives in the company of other women and . . . they absorbed much of their social behavior and attitudes from observing and emulating adult role models” (Alberici and Harlow 2007: 201).

Naturally, boys also were to be protected from bad influence. This was more difficult. John Chrysostom recommended that a boy should not converse with any woman save his mother. But a son of the house could not be held in seclusion. Thus, when the boy goes to the city, his attendant should keep close watch so that nothing indecent catches his eye—and he should not be given money to spend. There was a fear that the boy would end up gambling and carousing (*Inani glor.* 53, 56, 59–62, 79, with O’Roark 1999: 71)—another indication that under ordinary circumstances elite boys had much more freedom than girls. Even if parents wanted to protect their sons from the vices of the world, it is clear that a further aspect of the socialization of elite teenager boys was sex: the descriptions of both Augustine and Paulinus of Pella imply that having affairs at least with household slaves was considered a standard feature of elite boys’ life (*Conf.* 2.3.7–8; *Euch.* 157). And, after all, Augustine started living with his concubine already at the age of sixteen or seventeen (Shaw 1987: 45).

Elite children, paradoxically, had less freedom than their less honorable peers. The invisible family and status hierarchies, gender expectations, and the more visible

boundaries of their households marked the limits of their world. Whereas for the lower end of the local elites there were occasional possibilities for freer socialization, like Theodoret's visiting the Antiochian mountain ascetics or Augustine roaming through the streets of Thagaste with his friends, for children of senatorial status, and for elite girls more generally, there are no signs of such laxity.

CONCLUSION: CHILDREN'S AGENCY AND CONTINUITY OF FAMILY

For the socializing process, the most important factor was the informal instruction and stimulus given during the practice of daily routines by the most intimate social circle, parents, household servants, and close kin. Children were carefully integrated into family traditions especially through religious practices and with the help of stories circulating in the household. Because of the interaction involved in storytelling, a good story would act as an especially powerful socializing force. As ecclesiastical writers themselves noted, stories fascinate the young as "the soul delights to dwell on stories of old." Parents were to tell suitable biblical and family tales to children personally and not to leave this to servants. These stories would ultimately direct the children to appreciate and take pleasure from Christian culture.¹² Storytelling was used to create a sense of belonging with certain moral and social standards. In this, its functions differ from the use of stories in modern European and American families, among whom the stories function more as a medium of entertainment and affirmation (Miller et al. 1997). The continuity of the family depended not only on the biological link between the ancestors and posterity but also on the transmission of the social and cultural heritage and family identity.

If fathers were, in general, rather distant and even frightening figures for late antique children, the mother's role was crucial in transferring the family traditions and cultural values from one generation to the next. Michelle Salzman (2002: 160) claimed that "very young boys might read at home with their mothers, but early on they were given over to tutors chosen by the father and later sent to school. Thus boys would be open to very different religious and intellectual influences than girls." However, the influence of mothers and that of different childhood educators were not mutually exclusive—that is, both boys and girls were under heavy influence on the part of their mothers, before the elite girls married and the boys started their further education away from the home city or villa. Indeed, "a Christian aristocratic mother who attended church regularly and celebrated Christian holidays would be setting patterns that her children might follow" (p. 161). She would have been a spiritual role model not only for her daughters but sons as well.

¹² Joh. Chrysost. *Inani glor.* 39–46, quote at 39; Augustin. *Conf.* 1.10.16; Jerome *Ep.* 128.1; Synes. *Dio* 4.

Elite children learned the community's rules and traditions in constant interaction with a considerable number of people, of both free and servile background. The role of the household slaves and other early life educators, especially nurses, was pronounced, even in later childhood. Slaves and attendants were all the time at hand; even friends were often found among one's own household members. The situation changed only when teenaged boys left their homes for higher education. Even though we hear considerably more about childhood and parents from Christian writers than from (earlier) non-Christian writers (see Leyerle in this volume), Christianity seems to have made little difference when it came to parental involvement (but cf. Nathan 2000: 159; Bakke 2006: 163). Nor does there seem to have been much difference between the western and eastern elite culture in regard to children's socialization (cf. Shaw 1987: 51). Given the shared elite mentality and "status culture" (Salzman 2000: 353–5, 362), based on the common educational background and traditional value system, this should not come as a surprise.

The death of parents frequently features in the childhood experience of elite children. It was a common fate, but we hardly have access to it. However, it could help us to contextualize the situation by turning the old question around: did children have the courage to invest emotionally their parents while seeing their age peers become orphans in great numbers? Probably they had—and they might have been better equipped to meet this loss than their modern companions in misfortune. Even if the circle of peer age friends seems to have been very limited, elite children had around them a social network based on cohabitation and kinship relations, ready to take care of them and to offer them comfort.

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CHAPTER 29

REMEMBERING CHILDREN IN THE ROMAN CATACOMBS

JENNY R. KREIGER

INTRODUCTION

CATACOMB plaques—the engraved slabs used to seal burial niches—constitute a rich resource in the study of the commemoration of children.¹ The Roman catacombs once contained tens of thousands of these plaques, and each one represents at least one deceased person, memorialized by relatives or friends who served as his or her commemorators. The many ancient Romans who died as children can be challenging to “see” in the past, especially in funerary contexts (Carroll 2011), but monuments like catacomb plaques provide vivid snapshots of these people as their communities wished to remember them. Examining the plaques may reveal more about the adult commemorators than the deceased children, but in the process we may learn something about relationships among living children and adults in the ancient world. Catacomb plaques show how households and communities “remembered” lost children using a blend of traditional and innovative commemorative practices, reflecting the heterogeneous religious and social identities represented in third- and fourth-century CE Rome. The plaques also offer clues about how complicated the construction of identity and the experience of cultural change can be.

While the popular imagination may hold the Roman catacombs to be the underground cemeteries and hideouts of persecuted Christians, their real history is complex and not perfectly understood even today. According to the traditional scholarly view developed from the catacombs’ first modern explorations, the catacombs were loci of

¹ I owe many sincere thanks to Susan T. Stevens for shaping this project from its outset; to Ray Van Dam for encouragement and good advice along the way; and to Ville Vuolanto, Judith Evans Grubbs, and Tim Parkin for their help in preparing this final version for publication.

Christian communal burial. The catacombs were created, owned, and managed by the Church in the second century for the purpose of providing burial to Christians among other Christians, separate from people of other religions (summarized in Fiocchi Nicolai et al. 1999: 1–67, esp. 15–7). This view has guided the intellectual history not only of Christian archeology but also of the history of early Christian art and the social history of the early Church.²

This interpretation has evolved over time to allow for a less unified history. The catacombs began from “pagan” (i.e., traditional Roman) *hypogea*, while Christians were still burying their dead in the same mode as their non-Christian relatives and friends. Once the catacombs were firmly established as active cemeteries under Church control, “pagans” could still occupy spaces in them, sometimes appearing right next to Christians.³ After Constantine gave Christianity his stamp of approval, one can imagine that people of all sorts might assume some aspects of Christian identity with more or less personal commitment to the faith, and many may have adopted Christian ways of burial.⁴

Recently, a new mode of interpretation has emerged that challenges the assumed link between Christian faith and “Christian” burial practices. Éric Rebillard (2009a, 2009b) asserted that the Church did not own or manage communal cemeteries until the later fourth century or afterward. Nor, he maintained, did the Church or the Christian faith require Christians to bury among other Christians exclusively; survivors still chose where to bury their dead. Small groups of people—some of them united by Christianity, others sharing faith and additional interests, some having social but no religious connections—developed spaces in the catacombs for their collective use. By the mid- or late fourth century, the emperor assigned groups of *fossores* (diggers) to the Church in return for the Church’s taking some responsibility for public funerals (i.e. those of foreigners, the extremely poor, and the unclaimed). In Rebillard’s view, the real catacomb managers were the *fossores*, not the Church, so burial in the catacombs symbolizes an economic transaction (the purchase of a plot) more than a religious affiliation (admittance by the Church into Church property).

Both of these interpretations may be a bit extreme. Proponents of the traditional approach expect and indeed want the catacombs to be a manifestation of Christianity. In Rebillard’s view, on the other hand, the catacombs have virtually no relationship to the Church until the fourth century. As Rutgers (2005) pointed out (in a review of the original French version of Rebillard’s *Care of the Dead*), Rebillard argued mostly that

² For other discussions or expressions of this view, see Bowes 2008: 576, 585; Fiocchi Nicolai 2000: 341; MacMullen 2009: 72; Green 2010: 179, 186.

³ Assessments of people’s religious affiliations are made based on the language of epitaphs and the motifs of any decoration on a plaque or in a tomb chamber. The Via Latina catacomb, a suite of tombs with both “pagan” and “Christian” imagery, is the prime example of mixed religious affiliation in shared spaces. The social and religious dynamics at play in this space are imagined in Denzey 2007: 25–57.

⁴ See the following for examples of more nuanced views of identity and tradition in the catacombs: Green 2010: 191; Bodel 2008: 185–8; Milburn 1991: 24; Johnson 1997: 37–59.

the primary sources do not directly support the thesis of church management, but negative evidence is not proof. It seems more reasonable to me to say that the catacombs began from small nodes (some “pagan” *hypogea*) and grew to become predominantly “Christian” (but open to anyone), and while ultimate ownership and authority eventually belonged to the Church for all practical purposes the *fossore*s were in charge. I believe that the evidence from the plaques supports a compromise of this nature, as I will attempt to detail.

Another difficult problem to be addressed at the outset is the matter of chronology in the catacombs. The “excavation” (that is, the original digging out) of the catacombs occurred in antiquity; the vast majority of catacomb spaces did not permit stratigraphic excavation in the modern sense because they contained no stratigraphy of the usual kind. When they fell out of use, their entrances closed, and they were discovered when people in the modern era happened upon entrances, lightwells, or areas of collapse. Some sections of the catacombs can be dated by their association with historical personages or events, but most regions can be given only broad estimates based on criteria like iconography used in decoration, paleography in inscriptions, or perhaps spatial relationships to more securely dated regions. The generally accepted timeline for catacomb development runs like this: the first true “catacomb” galleries branch off from existing *hypogea* by the early third century; complexes expand to accommodate the vast majority of their burials (and martyr cults) during the third and fourth centuries; by the fifth century, burial has all but ceased, cults are being relocated within the city, and the catacombs become more of a holy tourist attraction than an active cemetery (Fiocchi Nicolai et al. 1999: 13–67).

Despite the difficulties inherent in the dating and interpretation of the catacombs themselves, catacomb plaques still offer abundant evidence for commemoration. I conducted my research from the *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* (*ICUR*), the catalog of inscriptions from the catacombs and other “Christian” sites in and around Rome. As a database, the *ICUR* has its advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include the organization of inscriptions by site, which make it easy to study individual catacomb complexes, and the provision of notes on figural decoration appearing on plaques, which allow a comparative study of iconography and epigraphy. Unfortunately, the *ICUR* does not provide photographs of all its entries (some plaques are no longer extant anyway), so one must rely on the editors’ transcriptions of texts and descriptions of images. The plaques themselves pose additional challenges. While some plaques can be linked to particular galleries or rooms in the catacombs (often based on the notes of early catacomb explorers), many plaques have no known findspots; this restricts the possibilities for studying spatial patterning but does not rule it out entirely. Additionally, inscriptions may be in Latin or Greek and in either or some combination of the two alphabets—for example, there are a number of Latin epitaphs written in Greek characters, and vice versa. Inscriptions appear on stone slabs, tiles, and other surfaces,⁵ which may have been broken, cut down, and reused, and there is insufficient osteological evidence to compare

⁵ For the purposes of this paper, I treat all combinations of burial-related inscription, decoration, and surface as potential “plaques.”

bodies with inscriptions—in short, there are innumerable points at which the connections between people and plaques can break. If these glaring problems are temporarily set aside, an examination of catacomb plaques may prove rewarding, even if the questions the material raises outnumber those that it answers.

APPROACHING CATACOMB COMMEMORATION

This study analyzes plaques from five Roman catacomb complexes whose main phases of use fell in the third and fourth centuries CE. I use the most basic of statistical methods to compare how frequently a particular event occurs—for example, how many members of a group received a particular epithet on their plaques, expressed as a percentage. More sophisticated methods would surely yield more precise results, but I intend to find and convey only broad trends in a form comparable to that used in other studies. The results of my analysis indicate that children (of various ages) were commemorated differently from adults in the catacombs and from some of the usual patterns described in studies of Roman funerary epigraphy. At the same time, the plaques reflect the particular time, place, and religious environment in which they were made. Although they provide little (if any) hard evidence for the lived experiences of children, the plaques may shed some light on the place of children in communal memory in late antiquity.

A few earlier studies of funerary inscriptions deserve special mention here for the comparanda they provide and the ways they have shaped this project's approach. Statistical studies of funerary inscriptions often build upon the works of Saller and Shaw, who used the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*) as a database for social-historical research (Saller and Shaw 1984; Shaw 1984, 1987, 1991). McWilliam (2001) focused on children's funerary inscriptions in *CIL*, while Sigismund-Nielsen (1997, 2001, 2007) discussed the use of epithets and representations of children in samples from *CIL* and *ICUR*. King (2000) and Laes (2007, 2011) offered additional comparanda from *CIL*. The present study builds upon this body of work by also considering both the iconography used on catacomb plaques and the plaques' spatial and temporal contexts within catacomb complexes (all as recorded in the *ICUR*). By using a broader conception of the "commemorative habit" in the catacombs—the range of customary options, including both words and images, which survivors used when constructing memorials for the dead—I hope to provide a more detailed view of deceased children in this particular funerary landscape of late antique Rome.⁶

⁶ "Commemorative habit" and very similar phrases have been used before, but to my knowledge, not with this particular definition. Hopkins (1966: 246) used the phrase "customs of commemoration" to describe cultural patterns determining who gets a monument. Bodel (2005), on the other hand, used "commemorative habit" to refer to the rituals requiring family members to return to the grave. The term alludes to MacMullen's (1982) "epigraphic habit."

Catacomb plaques constitute a valuable research tool because of their relationship to memory. As Yasin (2005: 439) observed, when referring both to a long Roman cultural tradition and to denizens of Rome proper in the imperial period, “For the relatives of the deceased, the tomb was a repository of memory, a destination of ritual activity, and a space of cult.” For the same period, Tulloch (2011: 544–5) proposed that funerary monuments throughout the Roman world elicited “ritual-centered viewing” or “devotional visibility,” an effect that seems to have been stronger when the deceased was a child. The living stored up memories at the tombs of their relatives, depositing some with the deceased and accumulating more at subsequent visits for the performance of rituals. Designing and creating a funerary monument simultaneously built a memory, since the monument would maintain a physical and visual presence after the disappearance of the body. But while a monument holds memories for its creators, it presents a different sort of information to other viewers. The monument constructs a “memory” of the deceased for the appreciation of unrelated viewers, who may know nothing of the deceased apart from what the monument tells them (Yasin 2005: 436). In doing so, the monument also informs the viewer about the commemorators, through what they considered important to record or omit and what conventions to follow or forgo.⁷ For modern viewers, ancient funerary monuments reflect the world of the living while representing the dead.⁸

COMMEMORATIVE HABITS

To facilitate analysis of the contents of catacomb plaques, appropriate parameters must first be established. For present purposes, *infant* designates decedents who lived less than two years; *young children* includes infants and children seven years and younger; *older children* were eight to fourteen at death; *young adults* were fifteen to nineteen; *adults* were twenty to forty-nine; and *seniors* were fifty years or older. Ages are rounded to the last *full* year completed, so an eleven-month-old infant counts as age zero, a twenty-three-month-old as one, and so on. The infant category overlaps with young children so that infants may be considered separately or in context, as needed. The division between adults and seniors is arbitrary, but the others are based on generally accepted Roman lifecycle milestones (Shaw 1987: 37; Clark 1994: 12; Rawson 2003: 280–1).

⁷ The idea that monuments reflect their makers is by no means new. For example, Sigismund-Nielsen (2001: 166) examined how epithets used in epitaphs reflect the social *mores* of the commemorators. Similarly, Shaw (1991) considered the creation of epitaphs to be a measure of social valuation for various demographic groups.

⁸ Yasin (2005: 433–6, 440, 2009: 60–1) discussed the role of funerary monuments in the formation of communal identity, particularly when the monuments are located in communal burial spaces like funerary basilicas or, she says, catacombs.

The plaques selected for this study, 3,756 in number, come from five complexes in suburban Rome: Domitilla, Callistus, the Coemeterium Maius, Vibia, and Sancta Crux. They come mostly from regions dated to the third and fourth centuries, the busiest phase of the catacombs' development, with a few outliers from before and after that period. Domitilla, the largest Roman catacomb, serves as the core of this study, with other complexes selected to complement and balance it in size and location. My sample from Domitilla includes all fully preserved plaques (as given in *ICUR* 3) as well as fragments representing at least one attribute of the decedent (e.g., gender, an epithet), totaling 2,852. Plaques both with and without iconographic elements have been included in the Domitilla sample, but for the other complexes only plaques with images have been selected for comparison. Since age-linked patterns of commemoration are the primary concern of this study, most analysis will involve the 19% of sample plaques that preserve the age of the deceased.

Within the catacomb of Domitilla, I compared the commemorative patterns in plaques containing iconographic elements (901 plaques, or 32% of the Domitilla sample) to those without (1,951, 68%). I made this distinction to see what effect the inclusion of images had on the use of written commemorative elements. Aside from the presence or absence of images, these two categories of plaques exhibit some key similarities and differences. A total of 24% of plaques with images record the age of the deceased, compared with 16% of plaques without images. In both categories, however, the young child (which for my purposes I have classified as from birth to seven years) and adult (twenty to forty-nine years) age groups each constitute about one-third of plaques with readable ages, followed by older children, seniors, and young adults (in decreasing order of group size; see Table 29.1). A major difference between the two lies in their sex ratios (SR): plaques with images show a female predominance (SR = 89), while those without images represent more males (SR = 132).⁹ The different sex ratios are especially interesting in the young child group, where plaques with images have a female preference (SR = 84) and plaques with no images, male (SR = 112). The greater representation of males for this age group is consistent with (pre Christian) Roman epigraphic tradition, as represented in *CIL*,¹⁰ whereas female preference becomes the norm in the third through sixth centuries (Shaw 1991: 83).

Plaques with and without images share certain trends in epithet and formulaic phrase usage as well.¹¹ *Benemerens* (well deserving) is the most popular epithet

⁹ SR is calculated by dividing the number of males by the number of females, then multiplying the result by 100. A sex ratio of 100 indicates gender parity, less than 100 means more females than males, and more than 100 vice versa.

¹⁰ Parkin 1992: 15; King 2000: 128; McWilliam 2001: 79; Laes 2007: 32–3, 37; Sigismund-Nielsen 2007: 45.

¹¹ Formulaic phrases express notions or sentiments about the afterlife, however the commemorator defined it, and they include both traditional “pagan” ones (*Dis Manibus Sacrum* [“sacred to the underworld gods/spirits”], *sit terra tibi levis* [“may the earth be light upon you”], etc.) and comparable “Christian” ones such as *in pace*, *in Christo*, forms of *dormire* (“to sleep,” sometimes paired with *in pace* or *in Christo*), forms of *quiescere* (“to rest”) *in pace*, etc., forms of *vivere* (“to live,” as in *vivas in Deo*, “may you live in God”), etc.

Table 29.1. Plaques with ages in catacomb complexes.

	Infant (0–1)		Young child (0–7)		Older child (8–14)		Young adult (15–19)		Adult (20–49)		Senior (50+)		Total		Sex Ratio
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Domitilla	13	16	47	33	18	16	6	10	36	30	5	11	112	100	89
Callistus	7	9	25	27	8	1	2	0	13	9	3	3	51	40	78
C. Maius	6	2	13	12	7	2	2	3	16	16	2	6	40	39	98
Vibia	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	100
Total	35	45	86	72	33	19	10	14	65	55	10	20	204	180	
Sex ratio	129		84		58		140		85		200				88

All plaques above include images.

	Infant (0–1)		Young child (0–7)		Older child (8–14)		Young adult (15–19)		Adult (20–49)		Senior (50+)		Total		Sex Ratio
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Domitilla	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
w/o images	9	18	52	58	14	19	11	9	35	63	13	16	125	165	
Sex ratio	200		112		136		82		180		123				132

Notes: F = female; M = male; plaques with indeterminate gender (or multiple primary decedents) not included. Sancta Crux contained no plaques with ages. A sex ratio of 100 signifies gender parity, < 100 female preference, > 100 male preference. Note that the "infant" group falls within the age range of the "young child" group.

(almost one-third of all epithet occurrences), followed either by *coniunx* (spouse) or by *filius/a* (son/daughter; both around 20%), then *dulcis* (sweet; 16% for both categories). *Benemerens* generally increases in frequency as age increases across both (image) categories. *Dulcis* decreases as age increases, occurring most frequently among female infants in both categories. Plaques without images see the preference for calling females sweet continue across all age groups, while plaques with images do not. Plaques with *innocens* (innocent, harmless) are rare and belong predominantly to young children (especially infants), with one adult or senior exception in each category. *Infans* (lit. non-speaking, like a little child) is limited strictly to infants, young children, and rarely an older child in my sample. The two categories share a similar distribution of phrases, with 72% (with images) and 85% (without images) of phrase usage consisting of *in pace* (in peace). The only major discrepancy between the two categories lies in the occurrence of *in pace* among seniors, where plaques with images use this phrase twice as often as those without images. As with age distributions, patterns of epithet and phrase usage seem relatively independent of image use.

From this survey of plaques within Domitilla, a few distinctive elements of children's commemoration stand out. *Infans*, a term used in Roman law for children and those

held unaccountable for their actions (Clark 1994: 12), is indeed exclusively used for children. *Innocens* also describes a childlike quality, but one that a few special adults could exhibit, too, in the opinion of the commemorators. *Dulcis*, of course, characterizes both the personality of the deceased and the tone of her or his relationship to the commemorator: a sweet child was (ideally) wanted, loved, and missed. The frequency with which young children (up to seven years) received plaques further shows the interest taken in remembering children *as children*, at least among commemorators who were willing or able to record ages on plaques. Taken together, Domitillan plaques with and without images construct children as worth remembering in their own right, despite the oft-cited pre-Christian Roman tradition of underrepresenting young children in funerary monuments (Sigismund-Nielsen 1997: 174; Rawson 2003: 280; Laes 2007: 37).

To gain a more nuanced perspective on the catacomb commemoration, I suggest that plaques without images be viewed as part of a basic package of commemoration, so to speak. While plaques with and without images share some trends, they differ in the frequency with which age is recorded and in their sex ratios. It would be dangerous to argue that plaques with images and ages indicate a more expensive monument or a higher valuation of the deceased, since simplicity of design can spring from taste as much as from practical concerns. Despite the more “old-fashioned” sex ratio of plaques without images, these could not all be older than those with images, since commemorators’ preferences and the practicalities of space, effort, and cost surely caused imageless plaques to be produced at all periods. Nevertheless, the choice to add images to the words on a plaque opened up a range of new possibilities in plaque design.¹² Commemorators who used images may or may not have been investing more effort or money in a monument than those who used only words, but the inclusion of images adds opportunities for the commemorators to invest meaning and memory and for viewers to try to read those things in the plaques. Allowing this premise, a broader survey of plaques with images (from Domitilla and other complexes) will reveal more ways the Domitillan commemorators differentiated children from adults in the memories they constructed and how the Domitillan commemorative habit differs from that of other complexes.

The catacombs of Callistus, Vibia, Sancta Crux, and the Coemeterium Maius (*ICUR* 4, 5, 8) combine with that of Domitilla to form a database of 1,805 plaques with images. These complexes represent a range of sizes and locations. Domitilla (with 901 plaques with images contributing to this sample), Callistus (with 586 plaques with images), Vibia (with nine plaques with images), and Sancta Crux (with only three) are all located south of Rome near the Via Appia. The Coemeterium Maius, contributing 306 plaques, lies north of central Rome along the Via Nomentana. Females predominate in the sample as a whole (SR = 88), but males prevail in the infant, young adult, and senior groups.

¹² The nature of *ICUR* makes it difficult to tell in many cases whether images on plaques were prefabricated (engraved before the text) or executed on demand. I imagine that both were possible and that in choosing a predecorated plaque a commemorator would have tried to choose iconography appropriate for the decedent in some way.

A total of 403 plaques have readable ages, yielding an overall average age of nineteen years. One year is the most frequently recorded age (or mode), and twelve is the median age (see Table 29.1). The two smaller complexes naturally contribute little to the present study, but I hope that their plaques may be useful to future studies of catacomb material.

As mentioned already, in the Domitilla sample (i.e., those with images) young children constitute over one-third of plaques with ages (37%), with adults making up another third. The sample from the Coemeterium Maius sees a similar distribution (31% young children to 39% adults). The Callistus sample, however, has far more young children (56%), with adults claiming only one-quarter of readable ages. Keeping in mind that *readable ages* do not perfectly reflect *attempts to record age* (because later damage to the plaque may have partly obscured what was originally written) I cautiously propose that these figures represent different priorities in the recording of age. As much as Domitillan commemorators drew attention to the ages of deceased children, it was possible—in an adjacent complex, in fact—to do more.

A cross-complex comparison of iconography illuminates the peculiarities of commemoration in Domitilla as well as the practices common across Rome (see Table 29.2). Birds appear on between 25% and 33% of plaques in each complex, making them the most common iconographic element on the catacomb plaques. In Domitilla, infants' plaques show birds most often (41%), with frequency decreasing steadily as age increases (seniors may match infants for bird usage, but the small number of seniors may be causing distortion). In Callistus, infants are less likely than young children to receive birds (22% vs. 31%), and adults receive them most frequently (44%). The Coemeterium Maius follows the same basic pattern as Domitilla. Similar trends apply for the occurrence

Table 29.2. Image, epithet, and phrase usage across age groups, complexes combined.

	All plaques	Infant (0–1) <i>n</i> = 55	Young child (0–7) <i>n</i> = 163	Older child (8–14) <i>n</i> = 53	Young adult (15–19) <i>n</i> = 26	Adult (20–49) <i>n</i> = 128	Senior (50+) <i>n</i> = 32	Most frequent recipient
Bird	30%	35%	34%	28%	27%	32%	28%	Infant
Multiple birds	4%	18%	10%	9%	12%	4%	3%	Infant
<i>Chi-rho</i>	24%	35%	27%	28%	35%	35%	41%	Senior
<i>Infans</i>	<1%	7%	4%	2%	----	----	----	Infant
<i>Innocens</i>	2%	7%	7%	6%	----	2%	----	Infant/Young child
<i>Dulcis</i>	7%	25%	21%	11%	23%	9%	6%	Infant
<i>Benemerens</i>	14%	15%	19%	21%	27%	33%	31%	Adult
<i>In pace</i>	32%	47%	53%	36%	58%	58%	69%	Senior

of multiple birds on single plaques: in Domitilla and the Coemeterium Maius infants dominate, while adults lead in Callistus. For commemorators at Domitilla and the Coemeterium Maius, birds held a special association with youth not shared in Callistus.

The *chi-rho*, the second most popular iconographic element, appears on 24% of all plaques with images.¹³ Across complexes, *chi-rho* use increases with age, but in Domitilla and the Coemeterium Maius infants receive the symbol more frequently than young children in general. The frequency of *chi-rho* usage may depend partly on time, becoming more popular in later periods: in portions of Domitilla and Callistus for which approximate dates of ancient excavation are known, fourth-century regions contain twice and four times as many *chi-rhos* as third-century regions, respectively. It is difficult to tell, however, what effect the presence of *chi-rhos* may have had on the assignment of dates to regions, and it is quite possible that later plaques could have been inserted in earlier regions. Even if all plaques with *chi-rho* date to the fourth century, the preference for using them on infants' more than young children's plaques is remarkable. This trend suggests that these commemorators placed special importance on marking infants with a direct iconographic reference to Christ, linking them to a religion in which they had had no chance to participate actively.

About 7% of plaques feature *orantes* (praying figures), portraits, or toys of various kinds. Images of these types facilitate the commemoration of children *per se*, that is, in a way that depicts and emphasizes their childlike attributes. As described by the editors of *ICUR*, almost all *orantes* reflect the gender and general age category (child or adult) of the deceased through dress, hairstyle, and bodily proportions.¹⁴ Portraits do the same with greater specificity, to the extent possible in the usually schematic style of carving exhibited on the plaques. Toys (balls, hoops, miniature wagons, and others merely labeled "toy" in *ICUR*) bear a strong association with boys' plaques (seven boys' to one girl's), though they appear on only nine plaques from all complexes, only two of those with ages. The overall scarcity of these elements precludes cross-complex comparison, but they bear mentioning for the individuality and age-specificity they convey when they do occur.

When all complexes are taken together, epithets appear on one-third of plaques. Infants receive epithets most frequently of any age group (64% of infant plaques), followed closely by all young children, then adults. Epithet usage in other complexes is similar to that in Domitilla, with only a few small differences (like a greater frequency

¹³ The *chi-rho* is a Christogram (symbol of Christ) formed by superimposing the Greek letter *chi* over *rho*. The combined character usually has six rays (like an asterisk), with the head-loop of the *rho* appearing on the top center ray. In the catacomb plaques, *chi-rho* sometimes appears apart from text (as a decorative symbol), sometimes within text (as an abbreviation of the name Christ).

¹⁴ To clarify: the editors of *ICUR* use a combination of written descriptions and drawings to convey the images they find on plaques. A plaque with a boy *orans* may have a note mentioning a *puer orans*, a drawing of an *orans* with childlike proportions and masculine garments, or some combination of word and image to convey "boy *orans*." Since *ICUR* does not include photographs of all plaques, I rely on the information given by the editors.

of *benemerens* in the Coemeterium Maius). Other complexes also generally resemble Domitilla in phrase usage (again, the Coemeterium Maius sees more frequent use of *in pace* for infants and young children than other complexes do). The description of epithet and phrase usage above (for all plaques in Domitilla) holds broadly true across complexes.

One further observation rounds out this survey of the catacomb commemorative habit. Across complexes, trends tend to undergo change of some kind in the older child and young adult categories (eight to fourteen and fifteen to nineteen years). Some of this patterning probably derives from the small numbers of people of these ages in the sample. Despite problems of sample size, however, older children exhibit obvious differences from other age groups: they are much less likely to receive some iconographic elements, and epithets and phrases in general. Such trends suggest that persons in this age range did not easily fit into either child or adult categories, making them more difficult to commemorate according to established patterns.

At this point, a few references to previous studies will illuminate the distinctive aspects of catacomb commemoration as compared to practices in other (mostly earlier) contexts. First, this catacomb sample shows a much higher representation of children under age fourteen among inscriptions that give the deceased's age, compared to McWilliam's sample of "pagan" inscriptions from *CIL*. About half of the catacomb plaques with ages belong to children under fourteen, while the same group in McWilliam's (2001: 80) sample received 31% and 34%, respectively, of inscriptions from selected regions of Italy and Rome itself. Sigismund-Nielsen (2001: 167) pointed out that the "time gap" between inscriptions from the "pagan" (first through third centuries) and "Christian" (third century onward) periods makes it hard to determine whether changes in commemoration were due to differences in time, place, religious beliefs, or some combination of those factors (see following for more discussion of change in the third and fourth centuries). Whatever the reason for the change, catacomb commemorators placed greater emphasis than their predecessors on recording children's ages, choosing to remember children *as children*.

The catacombs also exhibit different gender biases than samples from *CIL*. Laes and Sigismund-Nielsen both record preponderances of boys under the age of seven (Laes 2007: 37; Sigismund-Nielsen 2007: 45). In plaques with images in Domitilla and the Coemeterium Maius, however, girls outnumber boys in this age group, and in Callistus there are only two more boys than girls. As discussed already, plaques without images from Domitilla follow the preference for young boys over girls observed in *CIL*. It seems that whatever motivated commemorators represented in *CIL* to favor boys did not affect all catacomb commemorators equally, and the decision to include images on plaques seems to distinguish a different type of commemoration.

Certain patterns in epithet usage in children's inscriptions align across *CIL* and *ICUR* samples. Laes (2007: 35) found that *infans* applies to children under age seven, with rare exceptions, and the catacombs follow this pattern: one instance of *infans* belongs to a ten-year-old boy, but the rest of the *infantes* are age seven or younger. *Innocens* also pertains to children under seven, with the rare exceptional cases belonging to men in their

upper sixties (Sigismund-Nielsen 2001: 173). The present survey finds that this tendency holds beyond the complexes Sigismund-Nielsen chose (*ICUR* 3 and 4, or Domitilla, Callistus, and a few small sites nearby). The few comparanda presented here demonstrate how catacomb commemoration adhered to tradition in some respects while making changes in others. These trends also suggest the continuity of some experiences for commemorators. While some of the commemorators' options or priorities changed, others remained the same as they had been before Christianity and the catacombs.

REMEMBERING CHILDREN

Who were the children and commemorators represented in the Domitilla complex? Although the plaques have provided some insights, correlating the community represented in a catacomb to a real, discrete living community in ancient Rome is problematic, if not impossible, for most complexes, including the ones in this study.¹⁵ For this reason, I will consider all five complexes together when seeking to place catacomb material and social history in dialogue. The plaques from Domitilla have already demonstrated that plaques with images do not perfectly represent all plaques, but for the moment let plaques with images stand for catacomb commemoration as a whole. Taken together, then, catacomb plaques reveal clear trends in the commemorators' constructions of children. First, it seems that children's ages are especially worth noting, if a commemorator was able or willing to note age at all (cf. Shaw 1991). At the same time, females are well represented, perhaps even overrepresented, and the gender of the deceased makes very little difference in commemorators' choice of elements on plaques. In terms of iconography, birds are important, especially for young people. For whatever reason—their semantic versatility, their prevalence in the living world, the lively aspect they may bring to a deathly place—birds play a prominent role in catacomb iconography.¹⁶ Use of the *chi-rho* suggests that children could, from a commemorator's point of view, have spiritual status equal to that of adults, even if this was not expressed as frequently for children as for adults. Sigismund-Nielsen (1997: 173) proposed that *innocens* refers strictly to baptized people and that children are designated *innocens* to announce their baptism and salvation; the same impulse may drive the use of the *chi-rho*. *In pace*, although also used less frequently for children than for adults, still appears on about half of children's plaques. Plaques with no sign of Christian affiliation may reflect other beliefs or simply other priorities in commemoration.

¹⁵ Rebillard (2009b) argued that in the third and fourth centuries, the Church did not regulate the funerary practices of all Christians; it only governed burial in certain regions under its direct control, which did not include all the catacombs. This does not rule out the use of specific catacomb regions by specific lay organizations.

¹⁶ For further discussion of the iconographic meanings of birds, see Snyder 1985: 16–7; Murray and Murray 2004: 61; Bisconti 2000: 153–4.

Through portraits and age- and gender-specific *orantes*, commemorators construct children as physically distinct from adults, with proportions and attributes different from those of adults (within the limits of the medium, of course). Commemorators also comment upon the relationships between children and material culture. Toys are shown on children's plaques, perhaps as a two-dimensional way of dedicating these objects at the grave. Tools (e.g., weaving implements, awls, hammers) seldom appear on children's plaques, and when they do, they prompt context-specific interpretations. Perhaps tools represent a child's (lost) future in a particular craft, or a child's actual occupation (Sigismund-Nielsen 2007: 50–1). Alternatively, these tools could represent toys in the form of tools; besides rolling hoops, wagons, or balls, children may well have been playing with toy versions of the tools adults used in trades. Wherever a depicted object falls on the toy–tool spectrum, these images provide evidence of adult observation and idealization of children's behavior.¹⁷

Patterns in the use of epithets show that for the commemorators, children have characteristics worth describing, even if this is done in a generic way. The commemorators prioritize children's sweetness and innocence (*dulcis, innocens, infans*) over their good performance in family or social roles (*benemerens*), thereby differentiating them from adults. Together with images, phrases, and age and gender indicators, these patterns demonstrate what commemorators wished to remember about their dead, and what they wanted unrelated observers to know about their lost loved ones.

Useful as the plaques are for examining trends in commemoration, they can also paint touching portraits of lost children and those who mourned them. Two examples from the catacomb of Domitilla will show how some plaques mix common and unusual elements to fit the commemorators' needs. Pasiphilos (*ICUR* 8065) died at the age of three months, and his plaque describes him in Greek as "short-lived" (*oli[go]khronios*), signaling his commemorators' sense of loss (Figure 29.1). Engraved below the text is a portrait of Pasiphilos as a nude, winged boy, standing between two birds, one of which holds a grape cluster in its beak. The birds are almost as big as Pasiphilos, and his head is large for his body—perhaps this image depicts the infant boy as his commemorators imagined him in the afterlife. The plaque includes no explicit information about the family's religion, class, or other members; the monument focuses on an idealized image of a little lost boy. Plaques like this easily could have served as "sites of memory," prompting "devotional" viewing when families returned to catacombs to remember their dead, or to bury again (Yasin 2005; Tulloch 2011).

Criste's plaque (*ICUR* 6618) also builds memory around an image of a child in the afterlife, this time with more explicit Christian connotations (Figure 29.2). The inscription reads, "Cristor to his daughter Criste, in peace, four years" (*Cristor filiae suae Criste in pace an[n]is IIII*). Criste, carved in sunken relief, stands with hands upraised in the *orans* pose, and the text separates her from a male figure, presumably her father Cristor. He raises a cup or piece of food to his mouth with one hand, offering

¹⁷ On toys and children's material culture, see Harlow in this volume.



FIGURE 29.1 Funerary plaque of Pasiphilos. Catacomb of Domitilla (*ICUR* 8065). 24 x 55 x 1.8 cm. (Drawing by author.)



FIGURE 29.2 Funerary plaque of Criste. Catacomb of Domitilla (*ICUR* 6618). 30 x 76 x 3.5 cm. (Drawing by author.)

some to a crouching dog with the other. Birds with tree branches or sprigs frame the composition, although the bird at the right is disproportionately large—perhaps this plaque came pre-decorated with this bird, and the engraver added the rest of the contents on request. The depiction of commemorators and ritual behavior on this plaque provides a powerful illustration of the theories of Yasin (2005) and Tulloch (2011) about memory and commemoration. The plaque constructs a memory of Criste in paradise and models the devotional behavior expected of visitors. While few plaques

are as elaborate as those of Criste and Pasiphilos, these two show how commemorators could blend convention and innovation in the construction of monuments and memory.

COMMEMORATION IN CONTEXT

The commemorative habits revealed in Domitilla and the other complexes become more meaningful when placed in their social context. Conceptions of childhood, the identities of commemorators, and even the inner workings of catacomb management can illuminate the commemorative habit, or be illuminated by it. The following overview of the catacombs' cultural context should not be considered complete or definitive; I intend simply to outline what was going on outside the catacombs and to fit them into that picture.

Dead children occupied a paradoxical position in Roman society. In a way, high mortality made them prominent: between 20 and 40% of live-born children probably died before their first birthdays, about half before their tenth (Garnsey 1991: 52; Carroll 2011: 102; Parkin 1992; see also Parkin in this volume). Rare indeed must have been the family that did not experience the death of a child. But when these children left the community of the living, relatively few joined that of the dead, at least in ways that are visible to modern eyes. Infants especially have been underrepresented by funerary monuments, both in the Roman Empire and throughout history (Sigismund-Nielsen 1997: 174; Rawson 2003: 280).¹⁸ Traditional prescriptions for public displays of mourning could have obscured these children from ancient view as well, granting (for example) one month of formal mourning for each year lived by a three- to nine-year-old, only informal mourning for those under three, and nothing at all for children under a year. It should be noted that these guidelines represent an elite perspective and were not enforceable in private life (Rawson 2003: 281). They nevertheless represent the sort of attitude that led Ariès to think that the ancients simply did not *feel* the death of a child in the ways that post-industrial families do (Ariès 1962: 38–9; cf. Golden 1988).

The third century saw a change in the commemoration of children—specifically, an increase in the writing of epitaphs for children. In the third through sixth centuries (a period Shaw generically labels “Christian”), children received far more epitaphs in the western part of the empire than previously (Shaw 1984: 478–80). Cities—especially Rome and Ostia—emphasized children more than rural areas (Shaw 1991: 73–5). Shaw calls this phenomenon a “cultural preference amongst Christians that called for

¹⁸ I emphasize the invisibility of infants *to us* because of the problems of preservation and detection peculiar to infant burials. Romans—like many other societies, ancient to modern—practiced differential treatment of infant burials (Scott 1999). Dead infants may have been just as visible as anyone else in their communities to those who knew how and where to see them. On infant burials see also Stevens in this volume.

the commemoration of children” (1984: 467–73). Children (broadly defined here as under 20 years) constitute 30 to 40% of epitaphs in some samples, and Shaw believes that Christian ideology both caused and spread this habit of frequent representation (1984: 478–82; 1991: 80). Whether Christianity *caused* widespread change in commemorative practice is debatable, but the shift itself is undeniable: 58% of all plaques with ages in this study (including those without images) belong to people under twenty years of age, and the vast majority of these plaques (if not all of them) should be dated to the third century or later.

For those children who did receive monuments, it seems that the third century marked shifts in how commemorators represented them. For McWilliam’s sample of first- through third-century urban and rural Italian epitaphs, the main theme of children’s monuments is the advertisement of the relationship between the child and the dedicator, especially when the child played a role in the adult’s status identity (2001: 85–6). For example, freedmen had a tradition of depicting their families, especially children, in the iconographic garb of citizens, a way of claiming in death the status to which they aspired in life (George 2005: 43; see Larsson Lovén in this volume). By the fourth century, the recording of dedicator-dedicatee relationships had drastically declined, as “the single most important relationship at the time of death becomes that between each person and God” (Shaw 1984: 481–2). In terms of iconography, representations of children’s activities (and children as distinct from adults) became popular during the imperial period, but these motifs were always less common in Christian contexts. In the latter children are not generally characterized by what makes them different from adults, or even in terms of their relationships with adults; rather, they are cast as equal members of a faith-based community (Rawson 2003: 296–7). Huskinson suggested that this equalizing trend may be a general one of the third and fourth centuries rather than an exclusively Christian one (2005: 91–103). It is tempting to attribute change in this period—especially change that seems to favor the “meek”—to Christianity, but as in any historical context, complex social forces may be at work.

Elite literature of the late republican and imperial periods adds dimension to the childhood constructed in funerary monuments, even if the literary perspective skews toward an elite, adult male (and sometimes Christian) viewpoint. Discussions of traditional prescriptions for the mourning of children, children’s medical care, and children’s education appear in many of the standard works on Roman childhood (for an overview of these subjects, see Harlow and Laurence 2002: 34–53, 132–43). Christian authors had their opinions, too, and much more sophisticated analyses of these perspectives than any this author could attempt may be found in this volume (Vuolanto; Leyerle) and elsewhere (e.g., Clark 1994; Gould 1994; Bakke 2005; Horn and Martens 2009). For present purposes, let it stand that children, though subject to stereotyping, inspired some conflicting opinions in the minds of elite authors. Children were innocent but ignorant, in need of education, yet possessing some virtues that would fade with time and the tampering of adults (see the chapters by Leyerle and Vuolanto in this volume). To have children (but not too many) was a blessing, and to lose them

unavoidable and more or less devastating, depending on one's circumstances and disposition (see Parkin in this volume). For Christian authors, childlike innocence became a spiritual attribute to be cultivated in believers of all ages. Just as children could perform certain duties in traditional Roman worship, both public and private, Christian children participated in the religious life of their families and communities. Although opinions differed on whether a child's innocence sufficed to save him or her from damnation, infants and young children could receive baptism, just in case (Wiedemann 1989: 188–93). Whether viewed as helpers or hindrances in their parents' social and spiritual lives, children were by no means invisible in their families and communities.

Elite art of the imperial period, especially art created for public consumption, projected its own image of children, using them as symbols of official values (Rawson 1997: 212–27; Uzzi 2005). From Augustus onward, official art showed children representing civic virtues, public piety, and dynastic fertility. Second-century emperors developed this iconography of childhood in official art (e.g., coins, public sculpture) to convey messages of imperial beneficence toward children specifically, but also to the subject population as a whole (Rawson 2001: 37–8). In the realm of elite private art, children's sarcophagi, portrait busts, and other personal monuments of this period sometimes depict children involved in their real (or aspired-to) activities, but these monuments, presumably expensive, typically represent the interests and perspectives of wealthy citizens (Huskinson 1996; Rawson 1997: 223, 229–32; Backe-Dahmen 2006: 132). Below the elite vantage point, ordinary people of the Roman Empire also valued children for their potential, but in a more practical way. Poorer Romans hoped that the costs of raising children would be repaid by the children's labor and care for their parents in old age and after death (Bakke 2005: 24; Sigismund-Nielsen 2007: 49–54). For the more materially successful freed families, freeborn children represented the parents' chance at social legitimacy and advancement (George 2005: 29–40; see also Larsson Lovén in this volume). And for Romans of all classes, children served as a form of “memory insurance,” responsible for their parents' social afterlife through funerals, monuments, and subsequent rituals (Bakke 2005: 24; Vuolanto 2010). Commemorative practices like the recording of age may have expressed the sense of “lost expectations, whether affective or financial,” that could accompany the death of a child of any class (Sigismund-Nielsen 2007: 40). Similarly, cast and mold-made portraits of children “construct[ed] the memory of families” for some of the non-elite who had hoped for future success through their children, whereas the elite derived that benefit from remembered ancestors (Dasen 2010: 145). For Romans of all classes, the death of a valued child could prompt an urge to remember that child in some material fashion.

All these conditions framed the creation and use of the catacombs, which offer another context for studying the valuation and commemoration of children. Those who buried their dead in the catacombs did not have to agree with the conventions expressed in literature, Christian or otherwise, or observe older conventions of commemoration. Scholars have long viewed the catacombs as straightforwardly Christian

enterprises—from their design, to their decoration, to the population they represent.¹⁹ More nuanced analyses of the last two decades draw attention to the social complexity and diversity that the catacombs represent.²⁰ Traditionally held to be prime sources of archeological evidence for the early Roman church, the catacombs also shed light on the heterogeneous urban population of the third and fourth centuries.

For the vast majority of Romans, this period probably differed little from others. Relative poverty defined most people's lives, and "poverty ruled over death as well as life," limiting a person's memorialization to what his relatives could afford (MacMullen 2009: 69). If poverty ruled death, death ruled life in turn; Garnsey (1991: 52), for example, estimated average life expectancy at birth at twenty-five years and infant mortality at 28% (see also Parkin 1992). The lower-class population was ethnically and linguistically diverse, and while it is not necessarily true that "Greek meant poor" (MacMullen 2009: 70), the early Church's use of the Greek language (in popes' names, religious terminology, and epitaphs) may have connected it to the servile population as much as to the learned elite. After Constantine's conversion, the Christian community would increase in wealth and status, and the catacombs would see their share of wealthy burials in high-status spaces, but third-century Christianity was still primarily a religion of the lower classes (MacMullen 2009: 74–5; Bowes 2008: 583–4).

Popular religion, however, was far more complex than the usual pagan/Christian dichotomy makes it seem. A major part of popular religious practice lay in the cult of the dead, where ordinary Christians probably continued many traditions rather than invent new ones (MacMullen 2009: 95, 97, 109–11). Before Constantine, every Christian probably had relatives, friends, and neighbors who were, nominally at least, *not* his or her co-religionists.²¹ With so many connections to non-believers, Christians must have maintained some relationship with the memories of the "pagan" dead. These memories were located at the tomb, where ritual, cult, and social relationships overlapped (Shaw 1991: 67; Yasin 2005: 439). Catacombs happened to offer an economical way to practice the traditional cult of the dead, and archeological evidence shows that Christians did just that: their funerary inscriptions continue to use the *Dis Manibus* formula despite its reference to the divine spirits of the dead, and catacombs contain symbolic furnishings (and above-ground space) for *refrigeria*, funerary meals held at certain intervals after burial (MacMullen 2009: 75–80). "What is needed" for this period, wrote MacMullen, "...is the notion of a spectrum of religious affiliation.... The archeology seems to require this; common experience doesn't resist it" (p. 110; cf. Bowes 2008: 586). For many third- and fourth-century Romans, Christianity and Roman traditions blended in the practice of the rituals close to the maintenance of memory.

¹⁹ See Fiocchi Nicolai 2000: 341; Bowes 2008: 576, 585; MacMullen 2009: 72; Green 2010: 179, 186.

²⁰ Milburn 1991: 24; Johnson 1997: 37–59; Bodel 2008: 185–8; Rebillard 2009a: 33–4; Green 2010: 191.

²¹ The upper classes, on the other hand, may have had a much "purer" religious life, either among the pagan elite before the conversion of Constantine, or among church leadership. Both groups were separated from the experiences and practices of the common people (MacMullen 2009: 95, 97, 109–11).

Whom, then, do the catacombs represent? I believe that the answer to that question must be time dependent. Before Constantine and the Peace of the Church, the catacomb population was religiously diverse, as inscriptions, decoration, and social history attest. After the peace, with the nominal conversion of the empire itself and the development of martyr cults, the catacombs can be called “Christian” in population and management. Traditional opinion views the catacombs as homogeneously Christian from almost their earliest phases, but more recently Rebillard argued forcefully for the very loosest conception of “Christian” catacombs (Rebillard 2009a, 2009b).

Judging by the plaques studied here, a compromise seems the most practical solution. The catacombs contain literary epitaphs in polished verse (Laes 2011) and garbled transliterations of Latin into Greek letters, or vice versa. Some of the deceased had Greek names, some Latin—three, two, one, or none of them recorded on plaques. Some of the figural carvings on plaques were executed in sunken relief, others in superficial scratching, both with varying levels of regularity and apparent skill. Some of the dead are remembered as trade workers, church officials, or holy virgins. Familial relationships of all kinds, along with some nonfamilial ones, are represented in dedicatory inscriptions. Some plaques contain traditional “pagan” idioms, others Christian ones, and yet others a blend of the two to varying degrees. The plaques give an overall impression of diversity of interests and experiences, even within the physical and expressive limits imposed by the slabs themselves. The catacombs represent a range of Romans and their memories, in line with the blend of change and continuity in Roman culture in the third and fourth centuries.

In addition to all that the plaques say about the dead and their commemorators, trends observed in the course of this study may be able to shed new light on the commemorators through evidence they provide of the practical aspects of commemoration. While each complex has its “signature” commemorative practices, they are similar enough to present a unified, citywide, catacomb commemorative habit. I propose that the apparent uniformity may be more a function of catacomb management than of uniform belief or aesthetic. Strong trends in the formulations of epitaphs suggest that people followed long-lasting traditions, some carried over from precatacomb use, others possibly created in the catacombs. These traditions could be transmitted partly through the commemorators’ contact with catacomb plaques (during visits for burials and subsequent rituals), but the *fossore*s (diggers) probably also had a hand in the forging of tradition.

The *fossore*s were responsible for the engineering and excavation of the catacombs, and they are also known to have sold burial spaces and executed some of the decorations (Stevenson 1985: 21–3). Judging by the illiteracy displayed on many of the plaques, where at times the stonecutter could not even interpret the letters given him in a script, manual laborers like the *fossore*s most likely made some plaques as well (e.g., *ICUR* 10015). Tomb typologies and the palettes of paintings tend to be uniform within complexes, reflecting the workmanship of a core group of *fossore*s associated with each site (Stevenson 1985: 21; Pergola 1998: 78). The evidence gathered by this project suggests that the *fossore*s and other craftspeople attached to particular complexes probably developed plaque typologies along with architectural and decorative ones, and that when a new complex opened, a group of experienced workers would take their traditions to a new workplace.

I speculate here, but not too wildly, I hope; further research may show that commemorative habits derived from the memories of craftsmen as much as commemorators.²²

Throughout this discussion, the commemorators who stored their memories in the catacombs come into focus. These were mostly people of the lower classes. They were probably ethnically and linguistically diverse, and their religious practice probably reflected their general heterogeneity. To these people, children were sweet. Girls could receive monuments as often as boys, and infants deserved as much remembrance as older children. All children, in death as in life, could participate in the religious life of their families and communities. The people represented in the catacomb of Domitilla and other complexes were the common Romans of the third and fourth centuries.

CONCLUSION

What difference, to ask MacMullen's (1986) question, did Christianity make? This is not the first or the last time this question has been asked, and current consensus holds that Christianity did not make drastic, universal change in most people's daily lives. For Roman children, Christianity brought the *potential* for change, if not always the fact, in their personal, familial, and communal lives. Christianity offered some new career and lifestyle options (monasticism, consecrated virginity), although a Christian child may have been no more free to choose or avoid these than any other Roman child ruled by his *paterfamilias* (see Vuolanto in this volume). Children presumably converted to Christianity either in the company of their families or alone, with varying social consequences (Horn and Martens 2009: 96–8, 101–5, 113; see also Vuolanto in this volume). The high value assigned to children's innocence by Christian authors may have given children a special ideological position in their communities, but the practical outcomes of this shift are unclear (Clark 1994: 27; Horn and Martens 2009: 43, 347–8). In all, the Christian "paradigm shift" of the third and fourth centuries probably made little concrete difference in the lives of ordinary people. Perhaps the particulars of tradition changed, but the force of tradition carried on.

Catacomb commemoration supports this image of mixed change and continuity. The catacombs were no more purely "Christian" than their systems of commemoration were totally new. Change occurred in the form of shifts in priorities: away from an emphasis on the deceased's familial "piety" (Sigismund-Nielsen 2001: 171–3) and toward his or her religious affiliation, expressed through *chi-rho*, *in pace*, *in Christo*, and other plaque elements with Christian connotations. Not every deceased child received his or her own plaque in the catacombs, but when commemorators recorded ages, they took care to

²² Again, works like *The Bone Gatherers* encourage the kind of creative thinking that may open up new avenues of investigation in catacomb studies. Denzey (2007: 30, 126) discusses the economic and social powers of the *fossors* at least twice. For discussions of the many factors that could affect commemorative choices, see Carroll 2006.

point out their loved ones who died too young. As was probably true for funerary monuments earlier than and outside the catacombs, catacomb commemoration balanced survivors' wishes and resources with the skills and traditions of craftspeople in the funerary industry, constructing memories of the dead in collaboration. The catacomb of Domitilla exemplifies this commemorative multivalence, with old and new practices, simple and complex images, and both generic and highly personalized forms of memory being constructed side by side.

For children, the catacombs could have served as a vast repository of memory. Living children were responsible for sustaining the memory of their deceased ancestors (Vuolanto 2010: 189–90), but even dead children played a part in communal memory. Here, as in other cemeteries, deceased children were remembered along with ancestors and others; here they joined a community to replace the living one they left behind (Carroll 2011: 116). In the galleries and chambers of the catacombs, plaques hid the decaying bodies and in a way stood in for them, embodying the deceased in the words and images chosen by their commemorators. For a living child, to walk the corridors lined with plaques may have been an uncomfortable confrontation with death—but it may also have been an experience of communion, of being surrounded by lost friends and relatives. The plaques would have reminded this visitor of the (real or imagined) good qualities of the deceased; looking at them might also have felt like a reperformance of the rituals of death, burial, and commemorative piety.

The plaques offer one final, and more speculative, way to “get at” children and memory, and this route lies through the *fossore*s. Perhaps the *fossore*s, like many other tradespeople, handed their technical knowledge down from parent to child. If a core group of *fossore*s ran operations at a given complex, and if their children took over after them, and so on, this transmission of knowledge and experience could explain the maintenance of patterns over time, and the spread of patterns across complexes, as workers moved about or opened new sites. Consequently, the practical side of commemoration (like the design of plaques) may have been in part a function of children remembering, then helping others remember children.

SUGGESTED READING

For recent theoretical discussions of the archeology of childhood, with an emphasis on how to “look for” and “see” children in the past, see Baxter (2005a, 2005b), Kamp (2001), and Sofaer Deverenski (1999, 2004). Aside from the works cited in this chapter, Balch and Osiek (2003), Horn and Phenix (2009), Moxnes (1997), and Mustakallio et al. (2005) provide valuable perspectives on Christian families and late antique childhood. Paxton (2005) attempts to bridge the gap between cemeteries and living communities in late antiquity, and Yasin (2009) expands upon her earlier work on cemeteries and communal memory and identity. Although not yet available at the time of this chapter's submission, a forthcoming book by J. Mander, *Portraits of Children on Roman Funerary Monuments* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), promises to be enlightening.

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CHAPTER 30

STAGES OF INFANCY IN ROMAN AMPHORA BURIAL

SUSAN T. STEVENS

INTRODUCTION

INFANT amphora burial, the inhumation of individuals from birth to twelve months of age in a single, almost complete vessel, was common around the Mediterranean from the later second until the seventh century CE. Although rarely a majority practice for infants, amphora burial is found in a variety of cemeteries, both large and small, Christian or not, whether located in or outside cities, towns, or in the countryside (Jones 1987: 821–3). While tied to the availability of amphoras, it is not a custom easily defined by chronological and geographical boundaries or restricted to specific populations in the Roman world. Infant amphora burial is so widespread, in fact, that it begs an interpretation that is sufficiently universal to cover an experience shared by many populations over many centuries.

A few scholars have noted the womb-like shape of the amphoras used for infant burial, recalling texts that describe the uterus as a vessel (Norman 2002: 310; Dasen and Ducaté-Paarmann 2006; Dasen 2009: 210, n. 64). Others, noting the strong resemblance of these small amphoras to the votive offerings of *uteri* found in ancient sanctuaries, have suggested their potential as symbols of rebirth (Bénichou-Safar 1982: 341; Scott 1999: 120). The aim, here, is to correlate as far as possible the size, shape, and texture of amphoras with the age and stature of the infants buried in them. My working hypothesis is that both the choice of particular vessel types and the integrity of the vessel in the ground were intentional. Because of their womb-like appearance the vessels carried symbolic meaning as a provider of maternal protection and nourishment to the infant and as a potential vehicle for its rebirth. The evidence presented, of the correlation of vessel types with the age of the infants, can help us to recover stages of Roman infancy described in textual sources but invisible in other funerary commemorations.

Although “the cemetery may be the location where ideologies of age were most prominently displayed” (Harlow and Laurence 2007: 23), utilitarian tomb types in general, and amphora burials in particular, have not been part of that conversation. A correlation has been demonstrated between ceramic vessel coffins and infants of perinatal age in the Gallo-Roman cemetery of Chantambre (Essone), an indication that a tomb type could be part of the construction of age (Girard 1997: 223–5). Put another way, amphora coffins identify the resting places of individuals, who, although otherwise anonymous, belonged to the youngest age cohort represented in cemeteries. Indeed, like the very specific age record of infants and young children on inscriptions, in some cases these vessels may have given infants an age-specific identity within the larger cohort of children (Laes 2007: 29–32). The fact that amphora-coffins, by virtue of their original size and shape, were exclusively used for the very young, is a strength rather than a weakness of this argument. This study of infant amphora burials adds another dimension to the understanding of Roman childhood derived from the commemoration of children on sarcophagi, catacomb *lastre* (sealing slabs of *loculi*), and epitaphs and other mortuary evidence of the differential treatment of infants and children.¹ It brings into view at least a few representatives of what might be called an anonymous majority, a few of the estimated 50% of individuals who died as infants (Carroll 2011: 102; Laubenheimer 2004: 295; Guéry 1985: 315, table 1).

Recent scholarship that focuses on the youngest infants suggests that Romans marked milestones in early childhood development in a variety of ways (Dasen and Ducaté-Paarmann 2004). Véronique Dasen, for example, has shown how attested Roman rituals of birth relate to the developmental stages of infancy. The *dies lustricus*, the eighth day after birth for girls and ninth day for boys, when Roman infants were named, coincides with the falling away of the umbilical cord around the seventh day (Dasen 2009: 207–8; see also the chapters by Dasen and Parkin in this volume). Maureen Carroll (2011: 102–8) focused on the evidence of infant death in burial practice in Roman Italy. Relatively fine-grained evidence from cemetery excavations in North Africa, at Carthage, Leptiminus and Tipasa, presented here, now makes possible a considerable refinement on Rick Jones’ general correlation of amphora burials with children in the Late Roman cemeteries of Ampurias, Spain (Jones 1987: 821–3). In fact, I see variations in infant amphora burial in these cemeteries as possible reflections of two stages of infancy,² the first for perinatals and the second for those around six months of age. Indeed, Roman birth rituals highlight, in particular, two developmental stages in the first year of life, swaddling and weaning, which represent the infant’s increasing separation from its mother. Soranus, the second-century CE physician who wrote a treatise on gynecology, recommended the shaping of infants to ensure that they grew into erect

¹ Huskinson 1996; Laes 2007: 29–32, 36–7; Pearce 2001: 126–31; Norman 2003: 45. See also the chapters by Dasen, Kreiger, and Liston and Rotroff in this volume.

² Infants are here defined as those under one year of age. See also the chapters by Dasen and Parkin in this volume on stages of infancy.

and properly gendered adults, by swaddling them from birth until forty to sixty days after birth, depending on each child's strength (Soranus *Gyn.* 2.19.42). Roman depictions of swaddled infants, in fact, bear a striking resemblance to infants in amphoras in that the swaddling bands resemble the ridged exteriors of types of amphoras used for perinatal burial (Gourevitch 1988: 42). Soranus recommended that weaning begin after the sixth month, when teething begins, to be completed at the end of the second or in the third year (Soranus 2.21.46–8). However, osteological data of some historic populations show that some children were weaned between one and two years of age, and others were still breast-feeding at four years old and even older (Rutgers et al. 2009: 1130–1; Dupras and Tocheri 2007; Dupras, Schwarcz and Fairgreave 2001; Katzenburg, Herring, and Saunders 1996: 184–5; see also Parkin in this volume).

The tradition of amphora burial in the Roman world has been long recognized, but because of the large number of burials and the wide temporal and geographic range of the practice, it has not been systematically explored (Bertholon 1914; Peña 2007:165–70), though regional and local studies of burial practice in North Africa, Italy, France and Spain have discussed amphora burials among other tomb types.³ Because amphoras are utilitarian vessels and their occupants anonymous, most excavators accept that they were coffins for the poor, sturdy enough to protect the corpse, but cheap because reused, and readily available in a range of sizes (e.g. Blaizot, Alix, and Ferber 2003: 68; Soren and Soren 1999: 490–1). While practical, this explanation takes little account of the details which differentiate infant from adult amphora burials, namely the kinds of amphoras employed, and their treatment. When the practice was first explored in an early Christian cemetery in Sfax (Tunisia) by Vercoutre (1887), he distinguished two types of amphora burial, one for adults and one for small children. He described adult burials as covered with large body sherds of two or more amphoras without concern for the integrity of the vessels, of which the toes, necks, and handles were often missing. Small children, by contrast, were contained inside complete or nearly complete single vessels, commonly broken across their main axis into two or more pieces, often at shoulder level and reassembled as completely as possible after the insertion of the body. Vercoutre speculated that the latter practice was likely to have derived from a very ancient Mediterranean tradition of burying babies in ceramic pots.

In Vercoutre's day, amphoras were not typed and skeletons were not sexed or aged, but since then many more cemeteries have been excavated, the identification and typing of amphoras have become very sophisticated, and osteological analysis of skeletons has become commonplace and detailed. While it is now theoretically possible to be very specific about the age of infant skeletons and the types of amphora in which they were buried, in practice, the often poor preservation of infant skeletons and the absence of diagnostic features of amphoras makes the process far from precise. More often than not, either the skeleton or the amphora is well enough preserved for thorough analysis

³ Duval 1995; Maioli 1988; Campus 1991; *Le Sepulture in Sardegna* 1990; Sanna 1996–97; Colardelle et al. 1996; Gagnières 1975; Baills-Talbi and Dasen 2008; Jones 1987; Gurt and Macias 2002.

(but rarely both). Since my focus is on the dimensions, shape, and treatment of amphora coffins, the vessels are here identified according to the excavation report, not necessarily by the most up-to-date amphora nomenclature. Furthermore, the poor preservation of human remains in cemeteries, even when meticulously studied, often yields an age range rather than a specific chronological age. These age ranges are a salutary reminder that biological aging is only one means of defining age that is also socially and ritually constructed, today, as in antiquity (Harlow and Laurence 2007: 23).

While Vercoût's canonical description of infant amphora burial is applicable in its general outlines to practices all over the Roman Mediterranean, it does not account for the fascinating array of variations, large and small, that reflect regional, local, and even individual cemetery contexts. For example, some burials that fall generally under the rubric of infant amphora burial are not in a single amphora, the amphora is not always close to complete, and the vessel is not always an amphora. To take sensible account of the details and variations of practice, this study focuses on Roman North Africa (Tunisia and Algeria), where cemetery excavations at Carthage, Lamta and Tipasa, have produced quite fine-grained evidence. Although the number of burials and number of cemeteries in the sample are small, the pattern that emerges is roughly comparable to the practice of infant amphora burial elsewhere. This approach will, I hope, provide a framework in which to explore other regional and local variations in the practice as new cemetery evidence becomes available.

THE THEODOSIAN WALL CEMETERY IN CARTHAGE

My point of departure is a fifth-sixth century CE non-elite communal inhumation cemetery of 213 primary burials that lay just outside the Theodosian city wall of Carthage, near the city's north gate (Stevens, Garrison and Freed 2009). In this cemetery, a few older children and young adults were covered with large pieces of smooth, large-capacity, cylindrical oil amphoras of Tunisian manufacture. Fourteen individuals in the cemetery aged one year or less, by contrast, were contained in broken but nearly complete small, ovoid, amphoras (Freed 2009: 132–5). The infants in these amphora burials can be grouped into two age/stature categories (see Table 30.1).

Ten individuals, biologically aged from fetal to twelve months old, might be categorized as perinatal. The small size and squarish body dimensions of the amphoras, ranging from 25 to 43 cm in height and from 19 to 33 cm in diameter, suggest that their occupants were buried in a fetal position. Since most of the amphoras were Eastern Mediterranean imports that originally carried wine, the vessels arrived in Carthage as items of luxury trade. The five Late Roman 1 amphoras from Cilicia (see Figure 30.1A), three attractively painted Late Roman 5 amphoras from Palestine (see Figure 30.1B), and one Late Roman 3 Turkish amphora had distinctively rilled or ridged exteriors.

Table 30.1. Tunisia. Carthage, Theodosian Wall Cemetery

Site/ Burial	Biological age	Vessel type	Origin	Condition	Body height*x diam.	Age/ stature category
P3-1	3-9 mos.	Keay 52A/Ostia III.47	Sicily	Complete	55 (47.2) x 27	Infant
P3-2	3-9 mos.	Piéri LR8var./Agora M273	Aegean	Lower 2/3rds	64 x 29	Infant
P3-3	Inf.<1 yr.	Piéri LR4 B1	Gaza	Complete profile	71 x 31	Infant
P3-4	NB-6 mos.	Piéri LR1 A trans./ LR 1 B1	Cilicia	Complete	52 (41.6) x 31	Perinatal
P3-5	NB-12 mos.	Piéri LR1 A trans./ LR 1 B1	Cilicia	Lower 4/5ths	43 x 29	Perinatal
P3-6	Fetal-2 mos.	Piéri LR5 bag type 1A	Palestine	Complete	43 (39.2) x 27.5	Perinatal
P3-7	Fetal-NB	Piéri LR1 A trans./ LR 1 B1	Cilicia	Lower 2/3rds	33 x 33	Perinatal
P3-8	NB-6 mos.	Piéri LR4 B1	Gaza	Complete?	na	Infant
P3-9	Fetal-NB	Piéri LR5 bag type 1A	Palestine	Upper half	32 (24.8) x 25.6	Perinatal
P3-10	Fetal-2 mos.	Imitation LR 1/Egloff 164	Tunisia	Complete	47.5 (38.4) x 22	Perinatal
P3-11	Fetal-2 mos.	LR 1/Egloff 164	Cilicia	Body sherds?	na	Perinatal
P3-12	NB-6 mos.	Piéri LR5 bag type 1A	Palestine	Complete exc. neck	41.5 x 27.2	Perinatal
P3-13	Fetal-2 mos.	Piéri LR1 A trans./ Egloff 164	Cilicia	Complete profile	52.5 (42.4) x 27	Perinatal
P3-14	NB-12 mos.	Riley Carthage LR3	Turkey	Lower 4/5ths	56.2 (36) x 19	Perinatal

*Body height = Preserved height cm—neck or solid toe.

An additional seven amphoras (four Late Roman 1, two Late Roman 5, and one Late Roman 3) showed a different pattern of breakage from the attested burial amphoras that may have made them inappropriate as coffins. In fact, Late Roman 1 amphoras appear to be the coffin of choice for perinatal burials in Carthage in the fourth to seventh centuries, whether in cemeteries, churches, in small groups or isolated burials.⁴

In the Theodosian Wall Cemetery four more individuals, categorized as infants, biologically aged newborn to twelve months old, were buried in amphoras which ranged in

⁴ Annabi 1992: 186–7; Stevens 1993, 47: 144–5, 185; Walth and Miller 1993: 194–5; Hurst and Roskams 1984: 144–7, fig. 54, pls. 17a–b; Fulford and Peacock 1984: 120, fig. 34.2, 139, fig. 45.

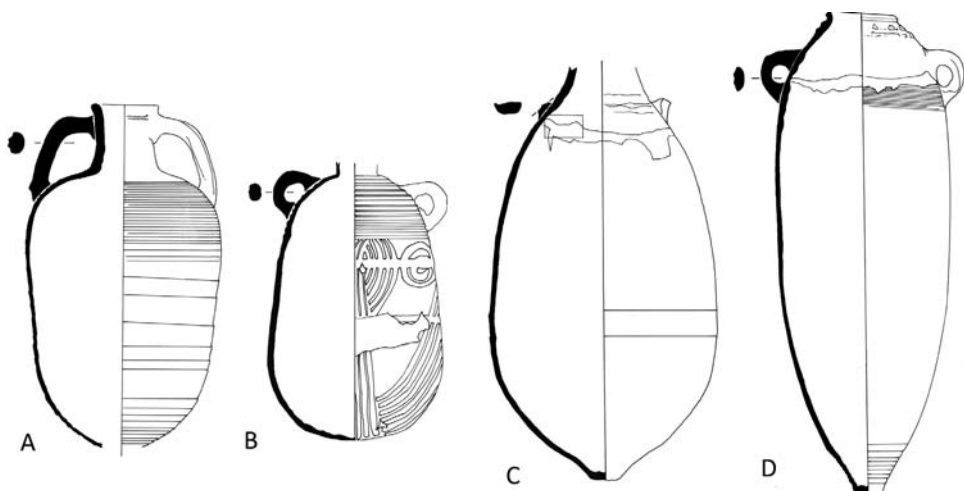


FIGURE 30.1 Burial amphorases (Approx. scale 1:11) from the Theodosian Wall Cemetery, Carthage. A. Late Roman 1 (P3-4) B. Late Roman 4 (P3-6) C. Late Roman 8 (P3-2) D. Late Roman 5 (P3-3). (After *A Cemetery of Vandalic Date at Carthage*. JRA Suppl. Ser. 75. 2009, 148 fig. 4.3 nos. 13 and 21; 159 fig. 4.5 no. 26; 164 fig. 4.6 no. 37.)

height from 47 to 71 cm and from 27 to 31 cm in diameter. The elongated and tapering shape of the amphorases suggests the body proportions of the infants in a supine burial posture. Like the perinatal amphorases, the infant amphorases were also imported, most likely carried wine and were also ridged and sometimes had dipinti on the exterior. This small group of amphorases includes single examples of various types including a Late Roman 8 (see Figure 30.1C). Only the Late Roman 4 Gaza amphora (see Figure 30.1D) was represented twice, and another of this type, like the Late Roman 1 amphorases previously discussed, was also found in the cemetery though not used for burial. Probably not coincidentally, this amphora type was also used for infant burials of roughly contemporary period elsewhere in Carthage.⁵

LAMTA

At Lamta (ancient Leptiminus), a port on the central coast of Tunisia, the pattern of amphora burial is different from that outlined for Carthage, though it is also based on a series of methodically excavated and published cemeteries with sound osteological data

⁵ Rossiter 1998; Rossiter, an unpublished paper, "From Bathhouse to Cemetery: the transformation of suburban space at Bir el Jebanna," and J. J. Rossiter and J. Freed, pers. comm.; Poulsen 1986: 149–51, 158, fig. 5.

(Keenleyside et al. 2009: 52). Here, the vessels employed as coffins were not imports but locally manufactured large cylindrical oil amphoras. Perhaps as a consequence, while amphora burial at Lamta appears to have been strongly associated with children, the children varied considerably in age and infants were comparatively poorly represented.

At Site 10, a cemetery with one hundred tombs of the second to fourth century CE, 82% of amphora burials were for children.⁶ Amphoras of very similar type contained seven individuals under three years of age. Four of five young children were certainly buried in complete amphoras (see Figure 30.2A), while amphoras for the infant, in supine posture, and the perinatal, in fetal position, were cut down to “fit” their stature (see Figure 30.2B). By age/stature category based on the length of the burial alone, Site 10 contained two perinatals, one infant and four young children in amphora burials (see Table 30.2). Three other children from four to nine years of age, like the adults in the cemetery, were covered by large sherds rather than being contained in amphoras (Osborne and Stirling 1992: 276–7, 281, 297).

At Site 250, a late fourth-fifth or early sixth century cemetery, amphora burials were exclusively for children under the age of seven (Rife 2001: 312, 321, 324). Except for the youngest individual, a perinatal infant, biologically aged newborn to two-months old,

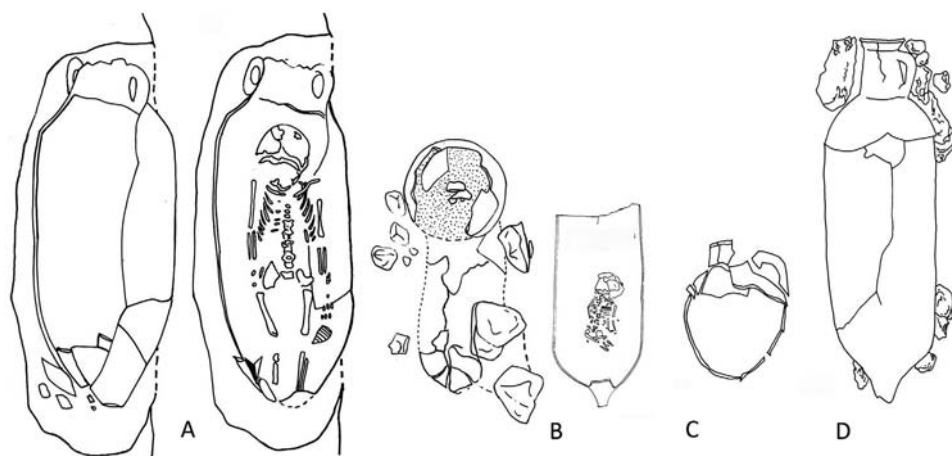


FIGURE 30.2 Burial Vessels (Approx. scale 1:24) from Lamta, Sites 10 and 250.

A. Amphora 123 (Burial 143) B. Amphora 121 (Burial 146) C. Burial 94-6 (Jug 5080) D. Burial 94-5 (Amphora 5077). (After *Leptiminus (Lamta): a Roman port city in Tunisia. Report no. 1. JRA Suppl. Ser. 4. 1992, 287 fig. 39; 289 fig. 43 and Leptiminus (Lamta) Report no. 2. JRA Suppl. Ser. 41. 2001, 344 fig. 4.62; 345 fig. 4.64.*)

⁶ Ben Lazreg, Mattingly, and Stirling 1992: 319, 327–9, Table 3; Osborne and Stirling 1992: 274, 276, 280–1, 287–90, 297; Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 127–9, 150, 153, 158, 167, Table 2.2; Walth 2001: 182, 184; Dore and Schinke 2001: 208–9.

Table 30.2. Tunisia. Lamta, Sites 10 and 250.

Site/burial	Est. burial length cm	Biological age	Vessel type	Condition	Age/stature category based on col. 3	Age/stature category based on col.2
10/Amph.71	78	2 yrs. +/- 8 mos.	Tunisian cylindrical	Complete	Young child	Young child
10/Amph. 121	29	NB +/- 2 mos.	Cen. Tunisian Africano	Bottom 2/3rds	Perinatal	Perinatal
10/Amph. 123	94.5	2 yrs. +/- 8 mos.	Africano grande	Complete	Young child	Young child
10/Amph. 756	40+	ca. 1-2 yrs.	na	na	Young child	Perinatal
10/Amph. 758	70+	NB-1 yr.	Var. Lepti AM 20	Complete	Infant	Infant
10/Amph. 1004	81	1 yr. +/- 6 mos.	Lepti AM 10/ Africana IID	Complete exc. toe	Young child	Young child
10/Amph. 831	90	18 mos. +/- 6 mos.	Tunisian cylindrical	Bottom 3/4ths	Young child	Young child
250/94-1	90	3-5 yrs.	Tunisian cylindrical	Complete	Young child	Young child
250/94-2	81	3-5 yrs.	Tunisian cylindrical	Complete	Young child	Young child
250/94-3	82.5	3-4 yrs.	Tunisian cylindrical	Complete	Young child	Young child
250/94-4	81	0-5 yrs.	Africano piccolo	Complete exc. toe	Young child	Young child
250/94-5	78	3-6 mos.	Tunisian cylindrical	Complete	Infant	Young child
250/94-6	33	0-2 mos.	Flagon 1	Complete	Perinatal	Perinatal
250/94-7	93	4-6 yrs.	Tunisian cylindrical	Body complete	Young child	Young child
250/94-9	81	4-5 yrs.	Tunisian cylindrical	Complete	Young child	Young child
250/94-12	67.5	2-5 mos.	Tunisian cylindrical	Bottom 4/5ths	Infant	Infant
250/94-15	92.3	4-6 yrs.	Sim. to Africana I series	Complete	Young child	Young child
250/94-16	47.3	6-9 mos.	Tunisian cylindrical	Middle 2/3rds	Infant	Infant
250/94-18	76.5	1-5 yrs.	Africana I	Complete	Young child	Young child

buried in a two-handled globular jug (see Figure 30.2C), all vessels were locally produced, cylindrical *Africana* type amphoras, mostly not reused but wasters taken directly from a neighboring kiln. Most of the amphoras employed in burials of young children were complete containers, while two large amphoras were cut down to “fit” infants.

A two to five-month-old infant was buried in the toe end of a cylindrical amphora, sealed with an incomplete toe, while a six to nine-month-old infant was buried in the body of an amphora from which both the shoulder-rim and toe had been removed and discarded. Again, by length of burial alone the group of amphora burials at site 250 includes one perinatal, two infants and nine young children (see Table 30.2). The anomaly is a three-to-six month old infant in a complete cylindrical amphora not cut to “fit” its stature (see Figure 30.2D). The message of the amphora burials in these two cemeteries in Lamta, by contrast with the cemeteries at Carthage, is that perinatals and infants as age groups stand out chiefly by their paucity. Infants were buried in the same type of amphora as young children, and could be marginally distinguished from them only because their amphoras were cut down to fit them. It appears likely that perinatals and infants at Lamta were buried mostly outside these two cemeteries.

TIPASA-MATARÈS

The pattern of amphora burial in the western necropolis of Tipasa-Matarès, Algeria, is different again from both Carthage and Lamta. In this cemetery, amphora burial was the only method of burying children and it was exclusive to children. Based on the size and shape of vessels represented this cemetery is unlike those at Lamta in that infants and perinatal individuals are well represented in fourteen of eighteen burials, whereas there were only four young children (see Table 30.3). Of the twenty-seven inhumations in the cemetery, twenty-two were burials in African amphoras. Although the skeletons from this excavation were not aged, the excavator noted that all the vessels were burial containers for infants and young children (Bouchenaki 1975: 159–61, 167–8). Although one perinatal was buried in a cut-down Dressel 23/30, the other five smallest individuals were almost certainly buried in a fetal position in almost complete small ovoid, flat-bottomed vessels rather than in amphoras, the body of which ranged from 28 to 37 cm in height and 13 to 30 cm in diameter. These dimensions are roughly comparable to those of the smallest vessels attested in the Theodosian Wall cemetery at Carthage for perinatal burials and the perinatal burial 94/6 in a flagon from site 250 at Lamta.

Three burials in the cemetery were probably for infants in amphoras of which the body ranged from 56 to 58 cm in height and 28 to 32 cm in diameter. These were small tapering amphoras: three were Dressel 23/30, of which one had been cut down, perhaps for an infant of small stature or a perinatal, and one was an unusual Dressel 27 suitable for an infant. Nine large cylindrical amphoras were employed as containers in this cemetery: five Dressel 27, one Dressel 26, and three untyped cylindrical amphoras. Of these, five complete or nearly complete amphoras at 75 to 83 cm in body height and 30 to 37 cm

Table 30.3. Algeria. Tipasa–Matarès, Sondages I and II.

Site/burial	Vessel type	Condition	Body height* x diam.	Age/stature category based on col.4
Sond. II/1	Var. Dressel 26, Grande africaine	Complete	92 (82.6) x 37	Young child
Sond. II/2	Dressel 23/30	Complete	73 (57.4) x 30	Infant
Sond. II/3	Dressel 23/30	Top 2/3rds	48 (41) x 32	Perinatal
Sond. II/4	Cylindrical amphora	Complete exc. neck and handles	90 (80) x 30	Young child
Sond. II/5	Dressel 27, Grande africaine	Complete exc. toe end	81 (68.6) x 26	Infant
Sond. I/6	Dressel 27, Grande africaine	Complete	100 (75) x 31	Young child
Sond. I/7	Dressel 27, Petite africaine	Complete	102 (81.3) x 32	Young child
Sond. I/8	Dressel 27, Grande africaine	Complete exc. neck and handles	92 (75.6) x 30	Young child
Sond. I/9	2-handled jug, Lancel forme 2	Complete, exc. broken mouth	37 x 23	Perinatal
Sond. I/10	Cylindrical amphora	Bottom 2/3rds	80 (70) x 23	Infant
Sond. I/11	Cylindrical amphora	Bottom 2/3rds	63 (60) x 32	Infant
Sond. I/12	1-handled urn	Complete, exc. broken mouth	34 x 28	Perinatal
Sond. I/13	Dressel 30, sim. to burial 2	Complete, exc. neck	67 (57.7) x 28	Infant
Sond. I/14	1-handled urn, Lancel forme 1	Complete	39 x 13	Perinatal
Sond. I/15	2-handled jug, Lancel forme 2	Complete, exc. broken mouth	44 (37) x 30	Perinatal
Sond. I/16	Dressel 27, Grande africaine	Top 2/3 rds	77 (66.7) x 32	Infant
Sond. I/17	Ovoid 1-handled jug, sim. to 14	Complete, exc. broken mouth	28 x 29	Perinatal
Sond. I/18	Dressel 27? but small and tapering	Top and bottom 3rds	70 (56) x 32	Infant

*Body height = Preserved height cms.—neck and/or solid toe.

in diameter were likely to have been for a young children. Four others were cut down to a body height of 60 to 70 cm, which, with 23 to 32 cm in diameter, suggests that they were used for infants.

I conclude from the three North African sites discussed here in detail that Roman parents, far from being indifferent to the deaths of infants under the age of one year, took great care in their burial by treating them as individuals and by recognizing them as belonging to one of two different age cohorts. These two successive stages of infancy were signaled in the selection (or cutting down) of amphora-coffins that marked the infant's size and stage of development, especially its dependence on or separation from its mother. In fact, the amphora types or treatment employed in burial reflect the same stages of increasing separation of infant from mother as the childrearing practices of swaddling and weaning (Hänninen 2005: 50–2). Perinatal infants were often buried in small ovoid vessels with grooved or ridged exteriors reminiscent both of the uterus itself and of swaddling bands, vessels especially suitable for infants in fetal position. Older infants were often buried in unridged, elongated, and tapering amphora types suitable for infants in supine position, reflecting the shape and size of nurslings in the early stages of weaning. Specific small vessels may have been selected as coffins for deceased babies (or larger amphoras modified) because they resembled *uteri* that could stand in for their actual mothers or the metaphorical mother earth. After burial, the vessels were made to look whole, both because of the symbolic protection that the “womb” afforded, and its potential as a vehicle of rebirth. Furthermore, the archeological evidence presented here suggests that amphora burial for infants should be understood less as a product of poverty or low status than as a marker of age.

CEMETERIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

Evidence from four cemeteries in France supports the notion that infants younger than six months of age were treated differently from older individuals (Blaizot, Alix, and Ferber 2003: 68–9). An infant cemetery at Poggio Gramigniano in the Tiber valley in Italy of the fifth century contained only one individual over the age of one year. Infants were rigorously segregated from fetuses by burial practice and grave location. Amphoras generally contained infants that died before six months of age. Fetuses were buried in a different room, under amphora sherds, thus differently treated from perinatal infants (Soren and Soren 1999: 490–3).

Three fourth–fifth-century urban cemeteries in Catalan Spain suggest a pattern of amphora burial similar to cemeteries in North Africa, especially that at Lamta. Although the skeletons in these cemeteries were not aged, some of the complete amphoras of a size appropriate for young children were studied in detail by Keay (1984). Since no catalog of burials exists that records exactly how amphoras were used, only complete amphoras studied and typed by Keay can be considered here. On the basis of the body heights of these

amphoras, I have ventured age categories for the children in Table 30.4, though any of these vessels may also have contained individuals of a younger age/stature category.

The cemetery of El Castellet, Ampurias, had twenty-one of twenty-eight amphora burials for infants and children in single complete amphoras, six of which were studied by Keay (1984: 13, 51, fig. 5B). None of these was the small ovoid amphora favored at Carthage for individuals of perinatal stature. Rather, the favored types were four medium-sized piriform Lusitanian amphoras, and two large cylindrical amphoras from Tunisia. Based on shape and body dimensions of the vessels, the first group of amphoras may have been for infants, while the cylindrical vessels were for young children. No smaller or ovoid amphoras indicated the presence of perinatal infants, although both the piriform and cylindrical vessels may also have contained the burials of individuals of smaller stature than their body height suggests. However, a tiny individual buried between two *tegulae* that does not appear in Table 30.4 was probably of perinatal age (Almagro Basch 1955: 293). Of sixty-three burials in the Estruch cemetery at Ampurias, over half were amphora burials, mostly for babies and children in single amphoras, though half amphoras were commonplace for small infants (Almagro Basch 1955: 306). Only the eleven complete infant to young child-sized amphoras are listed in Table 30.4. As at El Castellet, none of the amphoras from Estruch was of a type or size to suggest that it contained a perinatal infant. However, five were of a size (54–72 cm height x 22–33 cm diameter) and shape (two Portuguese and Spanish piriform types, a Late Roman 4 Gaza amphora, and two narrow cylindrical amphoras, one from Byzacena, Tunisia) to suit the infant age/stature category. Six other large cylindrical amphoras imported from Tunisia were likely to have been for the burials of young children (Keay 1984: 727).

The Christian cemetery of del Francoli (formerly S. Fructuosa) on the western edge of modern Tarragona, included 2,051 burials, of which 400 were amphora burials (Serra Vilaró 1944: 192–207; Keay 1984: 21–4, 58, fig. 11; Gurt and Macias 2002). The excavator noted that child amphora burials were mostly in the toe end of amphoras, cut off high on the belly and sealed with something else in place of the neck and handles, with amphora toes rarely cut off in preparation for the burial (Serra Vilaró 1944: 199–203). Keay restudied and typed 181 amphoras, of which the thirty-six complete vessels of a size appropriate for infants or children are shown in Table 30.4. As in the Late Roman cemeteries of Ampurias, no particularly small or ovoid vessels attested to the presence of perinatal infants in the cemetery. If they were present, perinatal infants may well have been buried in cut-down cylindrical vessels that do not appear in Table 30.4. However, by their dimensions, eleven amphoras ranging in size from 47 to 72 cm in body length and 21 to 38 cm in diameter fall into the infant age/stature category. Of these, seven are piriform vessels from Portugal, Southern Spain, and Tunisia, and two are tapering in shape, while only two are cylindrical. By contrast, of the twenty-five complete amphoras whose dimensions conform to the young child range, from 77 to 104 cm in body length and 23 to 42 cm in diameter, twenty-three are cylindrical amphoras, imports from Tunisia. The exceptions are two piriform and one tapering vessel, originating in Southern Spain and Tunisia. This sampling of the Catalan cemeteries suggests that perinatal infants, as at Lamta, are either underrepresented or undistinguishable from older individuals by their

Table 30.4. Spain. Ampurias, El Castellet & Estruch and Tarragona, del Francolí.

Site/Burial	Vessel type	Origin	Shape	Body height* x diam.	Age/ stature category based on col. 5
Ampurias Castellet. E/B/C7	Keay 59	Byzacena, Tunisia	cylindrical	95 (78) x 35	Young child
Ampurias Castellet. E/B/C8	Keay 21/ Almagro 51	Portugal	piriform	79 (69) x 25.4	Infant
Ampurias Castellet. E/B/C15	Keay 19/ Almagro 51A-B	Portugal	piriform	92 (75) x 24	Infant
Ampurias Castellet. E/B/C17	Keay 25Q	Byzacena, Tunisia	cylindrical	106 (93.5) x 25.6	Young child
Ampurias Castellet. E/B/C19	Keay 22/ Almagro 50	Portugal	piriform	76 (72) x 22	Infant
Ampurias Castellet. E/B/C24	Keay 19B/ Almagro 51A-B	Portugal	piriform	80 (71.4) x 27.7	Infant
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E8	Keay 25S	Byzacena, Tunisia	cylindrical	85.8 (70.3) x 23.7	Infant
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E13	Small cylindrical. Keay p.79 fig. 19.1	na	cylindrical	89 (72) x 21.7	Infant
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E14	Keay 25Z	Byzacena, Tunisia	cylindrical	103 (91) x 26.5	Young child
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E21	Keay 23/ Almagro 51C	Portugal	piriform	63 (54) x 26.5	Infant
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E31	Keay 27B	NW Tunisia	cylindrical	118.5 (106.5) x 30	Young child
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E35	Keay 25Z/2	Byzacena, Tunisia	cylindrical	116 (105.2) x 26.3	Young child
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E42	Keay 36B	Tunisia	cylindrical	101 (93.2) x 40	Young child
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E44	Keay 15/ Almagro 55	S Spain	piriform	67 x 33	Infant
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E46	Keay 25Z.1	Tunisia	cylindrical	89 (76) x 24	Young child
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E51	Keay 57B	Tunisia	cylindrical	112 (101.4) x 40	Young child

Table 30.4. Continued

Site/Burial	Vessel type	Origin	Shape	Body height* X diam.	Age/ stature category based on col. 5
Ampurias Estruch. E/B/E58	Keay 54B/ Almagro 54/LR 4	Gaza	tapering	70 x 22.5	Infant
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/1	Keay 51	Tunisia	piriform	76.5 (72) x 37.5	Infant
Tarragona. Franc.. T/1/2	Keay 24A	North Africa	cylindrical	94.5 (87.5) x 38	Young child
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/4	Keay 35A	Tunisia	cylindrical	103 (83) x 40	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/6	Keay 4/ Africana 2A	Tunisia	cylindrical	104 (93) x 37	Young child
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/7	Keay 25B	Tunisia	cylindrical	94 (82) x 29.1	Young child
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/8	Keay 23	Lusitania	piriform	74.1 (66.6) x 33.7	Infant
Tarragona. Franc T/1/10	Keay 25G	Tunisia	cylindrical	93 (81) x 23.3	Young child
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/11	Keay 35B	Tunisia	cylindrical	115 (103)x 42.7	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/14	Keay 32	Tunisia	cylindrical	108 (101.5) x 40	Young child
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/16	Keay 25U	Tunisia	cylindrical	101.5 (89) x 24.8	Young child
Tarragona. Franc. T/1/17	Keay 25S	Tunisia	cylindrical	90 (65) x 21	Infant
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/18	Keay 14	S Spain	piriform	74 (63) x 23.8	Infant
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/19	Keay 23	Lusitania	piriform	74 (63) x 23.8	Infant
Tarragona Franc. T/1/20	Keay 4/ Africana 2A	Tunisia	cylindrical	110.4 (97.9) x 34.5	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/21	Keay 25B	Tunisia	cylindrical	114.2 (100.9) x 27.3	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/46	Keay 54B	Gaza	tapering	70 x 22	Infant
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/61	Keay 25S	Tunisia	cylindrical	98.5 (83.3) x 23	Young child
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/70	Keay 25B	Tunisia	cylindrical	95.6 (81.6) x 28.1	Young child

Table 30.4. Continued

Site/Burial	Vessel type	Origin	Shape	Body height* X diam.	Age/ stature category based on col. 5
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/72	Keay 27B	Tunisia	cylindrical	115 (99) x 30.7	Young child
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/73	Keay 49	?	piriform	66 (52.8) x 36	Infant
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/75	Keay 23 bis	Lusitania	piriform	74 (66) x 23.7	Infant
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/77	Keay 5 bis/ Africana 2B	Tunisia	cylindrical	107.5 (95.5) x 41.5	Young child
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/78	Keay 4	Tunisia	cylindrical	97.5 (83.9) x 39.5	Young child
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/89B	Keay 28	North Africa	piriform	86 (70) x 26	Infant
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/91	Keay 4/ Africana 2A	Tunisia	cylindrical	102.8 (93.8) x 36	Young child
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/92	Keay 27B	Tunisia	cylindrical	120 (104.3) x 31	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/209	Keay 4/ Africana 2A	Tunisia	cylindrical	96.5 (83.7) x 33	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/210	Keay 19	Southern Spain	tapering	52 (47.2) x 32.2	Infant
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/211	Keay 27B	Tunisia	cylindrical	109 (93.1) x 32.4	Young child
Tarragona.Franc. T/1/213	Keay 25C	Tunisia	cylindrical	94 (76.8) x 22.7	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/215	Keay 19C	Southern Spain	tapering	94.1 (81.6) x 33	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/220	Keay 20	Southern Spain	piriform	87.5 (82) x 36.3	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/232A	Keay 25G	Tunisia	cylindrical	83 (65) x 27.8	Infant
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/232B	Keay 29	Tunisia	piriform	94 (82.2) x 30.5	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/239	Keay 25B	Tunisia	cylindrical	113.5 (100.5) x 28.4	Young child
Tarragona. Franc.T/1/285	Keay 46	Tunisia	cylindrical	94 (84) x 36.6	Young child

*Body height = Preserved height cms.—neck and/or solid toe.

amphora type. Infants, on the other hand, as in the Carthage and Tipasa cemeteries, were buried in characteristically tapering or piriform vessel types. Young children look like the majority of individuals buried in larger cylindrical amphoras in these Spanish cemeteries, though they are hardly represented at all among amphora burials in the Theodosian Wall cemetery at Carthage.

CONCLUSION

A useful by-product of this study of infant amphora burial is that it suggests, in Africa and perhaps in Spain, a third age/stature category beyond infancy, a rather general category of “young child.” Young children seem to have been buried in characteristically smooth, cylindrical amphoras, of a shape and size to reflect the child’s elongated body, more robust stature and independence from its mother after weaning.

The imprecision of categorizing perinatals and infants, while largely the product of poor bone preservation and conventions of biological aging, serendipitously reminds us that the Roman rituals of birth and childrearing, like the practices of later periods, may have been linked less specifically to chronological age than to stature and bodily development. The bluntness of even fine-grained archeological data means these stages of infancy are not as clear and definitive as we might like. They differ from cemetery to cemetery, and the treatment of individuals within a category is specific to each cemetery context. Even within a cemetery the limits of categories are not hard and fast. The perinatal category certainly included infants from birth to three months of age, but also may have included some premature infants and others up to six months of age. Likewise, while the older infant category may have been defined by individuals of six to twelve months of age, it undoubtedly included some individuals of one to two years of age. But even differing patterns of amphora burial make clear that the age/stature of an infant at death played a significant symbolic role in creating and maintaining its individual identity within its age cohort and community. The evidence of infant amphora burial in North Africa and elsewhere suggests that parents took great care in commemorating infants by selecting some specific amphoras, evocative in shape and suitable in size for their infant’s age/stature, and modifying other amphoras to make them more appropriate for infants.

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ENVOI

KEITH BRADLEY

THE *Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World* illustrates and symbolizes the arrival in classical studies of the study of children in Greco-Roman antiquity as an independent field of research. In bringing the volume to a close I offer some remarks on its achievement, and suggest some possibilities for future investigation. I take as a starting point a statement from M. I. Finley:

Childhood in antiquity was a preparatory stage for adulthood, to be traversed as rapidly as was biologically reasonable, and nothing more. There was no glorification of childhood, a product of modern romanticism, and even less of such more recent developments as the American discovery (or should I say invention?) of the teen-ager or the increasing tendency, tied to the complexity of the modern labour market, to prolong social adolescence into the late twenties. There were toys and nannies for the very young, of course, but no children's books, no special legislation concerning children apart from laws protecting their property rights, which takes us into the different realm of concern for the preservation of the family and therefore of family property.¹

These remarks come from an essay published in 1981 on the elderly in classical antiquity and are very brief, no more than incidental to the main topic.² I introduce them here however for two reasons. First because I doubt that much more could have been said on children and childhood in antiquity in 1981 regardless, so that the contrast with the contents of this volume will immediately be self-evident: a work of the present scope and sophistication would scarcely have been imaginable a generation ago; secondly, and more substantively, because the remarks make the essential point, their almost dismissive view of childhood notwithstanding, that the subject of children and childhood in

¹ Finley 1981: 159. The absence of children's books does not mean an absence of storytelling to children, for some evidence of which see Aasgaard 2009: ch. 12.

² See Parkin 2003 for the subsequent standard treatment of old age in Roman culture.

antiquity must be understood on its own historical and cultural terms. The point is all-important and it will inform the comments I try to make. It at once helps to explain the difficulty, for instance, to which Dean-Jones directs attention (Chapter 5), of identifying a pediatric branch of medicine in antiquity, arresting though it is that age can be a criterion in the Hippocratic corpus for understanding illness. Within the conceptual world of Greco-Roman antiquity, so different from that of the modern West, there is no obvious reason why there should have been such a medical specialty. As appropriate I shall indeed cite more of Finley's remarks.

The study of children in antiquity is a refinement of Greco-Roman family studies that in their modern sociologically oriented form began in the 1970s and 1980s, a period when social history at large took a radical turn. The development was due to the impact on the academy of contemporary public events in Europe and North America in the 1960s, especially the events associated with what is sometimes called the second wave of feminism and the movement to advance civil rights, and to new historical interests and methods of analysis best represented by the contents of the French academic journal *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Cultures* (as it was), and the British academic journal *Past & Present*. One product of the turn was the first serious modern historical study of childhood, Philippe Ariès' *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (1960), which was translated into English as *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (1962). Ariès famously argued in this enormously influential work that distinctive concepts of childhood did not exist before the early modern period. It is a view that has not won general agreement,³ but without it this handbook would not and could not exist.

The person chiefly responsible for the development of the field in classical studies is the Australian ancient historian honored by this volume. Beryl Rawson began to study the history of Roman children and the family when she was a postgraduate student in the 1960s at Bryn Mawr College in the United States as a pupil of the legendary Lily Ross Taylor. In the 1980s, however, increasingly confident that the family in antiquity was a subject ripe for modern investigation, she organized a sequence of conferences at the Australian National University in Canberra that led, among other developments,⁴ to a true internationalization of the study of children in Greco-Roman antiquity. This is evident from both her edited (and posthumously published) work, *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (2011), and also now from the present volume. Her own research culminated in her book, *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* (2003), the most authoritative study of its kind to date.

The principal monographs that opened up the field, pioneering contributions that it is more than appropriate to acknowledge, were Thomas Wiedemann's *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire* (1989) and Mark Golden's *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens* (1990). Both drew attention to the central problem the field raises, namely that of how to recover the lived experience of children in antiquity from evidence that comes

³ See for example Orme 2001: 3–10.

⁴ Including a series of collaborative publications; see Bradley 2011 for details.

predominantly from a limited number and type of adults, for the most part upper-class men, a problem that remains fundamental to the enterprise at large as is evident, almost inevitably so, throughout this handbook. Yet the lead Wiedemann and Golden gave made possible the often innovative and refreshing advances in knowledge contributors to the volume now display.⁵ In the last decade the subject has entered a second spate of activity, influenced above all perhaps by the rise of gender studies and the intricate involvement of gender studies with issues of sexuality. Their impact is reflected here in the proposals Beaumont makes (Chapter 9) about the ways children in classical Athens came to learn what was expected of them as adults—but categorically as adult men and women.⁶

One feature of the radical turn was the rise of historical demography. In ancient history the foundational studies of Keith Hopkins in the 1960s were of crucial significance, the outcome being what is arguably the most important development in classical social history of the last generation, a broad consensus on the shape of the population in antiquity and the factors that controlled it. Debate on details can still be rife of course, with decimal points sometimes in dispute as efforts are made to determine average life expectancy and related matters; overall population numbers are also contentious. No one now doubts, however, that there were always more children and young people in Greco-Roman populations than the mature and the old—Greco-Roman societies, that is to say, were always tilted toward the young—and one important consequence, as Parkin emphasizes here (Chapter 2), was that children were everywhere to be seen in ancient Mediterranean communities. Nor is there any doubt that by modern Western standards infant and child mortality in antiquity was exceptionally high, whatever the beliefs people held that death should naturally occur in generational sequence. It is no coincidence therefore that many of the contributions to the handbook concentrate on the effects of untimely death. The statistical researches of Hopkins, who was both ancient historian and sociologist, underlie this remark, and its technical vocabulary, from Finley:

The ancients did not draw up demographic tables, graphs, and curves, but they would have been fully aware of their high infant mortality and the considerable chance of death at any age, spasmodically increased by epidemics and wars. Unlike us, they had no experience or knowledge of qualitatively different demographic patterns against which to measure and judge their own: utopian visions of an age of Methuselahs were a protest against the inevitable brevity of life, not a goal to be sought.⁷

⁵ This is not the place for a comprehensive doxography, but from the non-English-speaking world Néraudau 1984 deserves special mention, as also on older children Eyben 1993 (first published in Dutch in 1977 and 1987), a book that, his pupil C. Laes apart, recent scholars have unduly neglected; note also Kleijwegt 1991. On Wiedemann, who might have figured in the handbook more prominently, see Bradley 1993.

⁶ See further Beaumont 2012.

⁷ Finley 1981: 158. On Hopkins' intellectual biography see Harris 2005. His studies are again cited in the handbook less frequently than might have been expected. The main demographic contributions of modern times are associated with the names, Parkin *ipse* apart, of B. W. Frier and R. S. Bagnall, E. Lo Cascio, R. P. Saller, and W. Scheidel. Special acknowledgment should be made of Brunt 1971, a work much ahead of its time.

A further consequence of the turn must be that unless highly qualified the notion that children were somehow marginal to or outsiders in Greco-Roman society has little descriptive or explanatory value. Their numbers, and the constant awareness of their presence the numbers dictate, make this in my view impossible. Here in the handbook the uninterrupted expression of interest in children on the part of artists through the Greek archaic and classical periods, as described by Oakley (Chapter 7), the consistency with which Greek authors imagined and portrayed children across time, as revealed by Pratt (Chapter 11), the attention to children perceptible in Roman law, as discussed by McGinn (Chapter 17), are just a few of the findings that suggest the inapplicability of marginality as an analytical category, which if it is to be retained at all has at a minimum to be modified to allow for distinctions of status (juridical and social), geography, time, and perspective. The female slave apprentice in Roman Egypt for instance may have seemed “marginal” to an emperor, but not, I suspect, to the owner who had an economic investment in her or to the members of the household to which she belonged, where social and familial bonds of affection may sometimes be presumed. The biological immaturity and developing cognitive capacities of children are not to be confused with social or cultural unimportance.⁸

All generalizing concepts about childhood and education in antiquity are of course potentially vulnerable in view of the vast chronological and geographical dimensions concerned. The studies the handbook contains range from the late Bronze Age to the fall of the Roman Empire in the west, a span of almost two thousand years, and they cover the entire Mediterranean world, including continental and northern Europe, Egypt, and other parts of the Near East. Under these circumstances there will always be exceptions to a seeming general truth. The goal of determining the historically and culturally specific remains important nonetheless, even as individual variations are observed and pursued.

Adult reactions to the loss of children in demographically challenged communities may be a case in point. Evidence that the ancients cared when their children died—the subject of a classic article by Mark Golden⁹—is plentiful, in both literary and documentary sources, and is sometimes taken by modern scholars to represent not only the dominant but also the only affective response evoked. The impact of the evidence may sometimes be attributable to literary artistry, but this cannot be the case with documentary papyri—prosaic sources that often provide the most vivid impressions of ancient social life and social relations, as emerges for example from Pudsey’s study of Roman Egypt (Chapter 24)¹⁰—in which compelling indications can be found of the

⁸ The literary representation of children cannot be explained by *topoi* alone. The interest of Roman law in children seems on the surface to offset Finley’s view that there was “no special legislation concerning children,” but the degree in a Millaresque administrative world to which the rulings concerned were matters of “public policy” may be questioned (cf. Bradley 2000a). Syme 1978: 70 refers to some of Ovid’s addressees in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* as “on the margin of society,” which is more than enough to point up the oddity of “marginality” as a concept.

⁹ Golden 1988.

¹⁰ Pudsey also brings out the complexity of living arrangements in which children frequently found themselves; cf. Bradley 2012: ch. 5.

pain adults at times experienced from the loss of their children. A methodological issue nonetheless is involved. Given that infant and child loss was a predictable reality, it is conceivable that some adult responses differed from the intensely emotional responses that mark the historical record. The inscriptions that commemorate the dead as studied by Sigismund-Nielsen (Chapter 14) and the amphora burials examined by Stevens (Chapter 30) will always be important evidence of “care” and their meaning is not to be minimized. However, the sense of loss may in some cases have been less intense than that often assumed by moderns to be normative, and if so comparable markers cannot be expected to reveal themselves. A volume of “positive” evidence, no matter how large, cannot disprove the possibility of an alternative attitude that discountenanced, say, the provision of an amphora or an inscription in every instance of infant or child death, which means that there can never be a usable amount of evidence from which to measure putatively divergent reactions to loss. The desire to avoid difference that to the modern mind is inherently unpalatable has to be reasonably balanced against historical and especially demographic contingency, and the temptation to interpret past practice through the distorting lens of contemporary preoccupation is something to be resisted.¹¹ Finley suggested that “in a world in which . . . early deaths and burials were routine, so to speak, the intensity and duration of the emotional responses were unlike modern reactions.”¹² He recognized that his suggestion was beyond quantitative assessment, but the suggestion cannot and should not be glossed over. Artemidorus, often an instructive guide to the everyday world of antiquity—he regularly refers to children’s deaths¹³—knew of a case in which seven children still at the swaddling stage had all been lost (5.73). A question might accordingly be raised whether the parental response in every instance must have been the same as the familiar example, say, of Quintilian when his two much older sons died.¹⁴ Affective attitudes in past societies are difficult to fathom, ancient mentality is often elusive, and patterns of culture are not always predictable.

Finley’s brief allusion to war is a reminder, and here I generalize sweepingly, that there can have been few epochs in antiquity when Greeks and Romans were free from the reality or the prospect of armed conflict. Greek literature begins with the “poem of force”¹⁵ that dominated the intellectual tradition it created, and although heroic virtue was somehow found in arms, the men antiquity called its “poets” were not reluctant to catalogue in horrendous detail the human tragedies the pursuit of virtue brought. In the

¹¹ Here for instance by Dasen (Chapter 1), on ancient views of the embryo. The ubiquitous practice of infant abandonment in antiquity surveyed by Evans Grubbs is relevant: ancient towns and villages knew what it was like to have infants’ rotting corpses constantly in their midst (Chapter 4).

¹² Finley 1981: 159.

¹³ Bradley 2000b.

¹⁴ Quint. *Inst.* 6 praef. 6–11. The general absence of statistical evidence in ancient history makes many social problems insoluble. Kreiger (Chapter 29) persuasively shows how success may occasionally be achieved. On other problems of evidence see *mutatis mutandis* Bradley 2008: 372–3.

¹⁵ Weil 2005.

classical age Greeks were constantly fighting either one another or a common enemy; subsequently Alexander wreaked havoc everywhere he went, and in turn the wars of his successors, almost impossible to untangle, were incessant. In due course the Roman military machine proved unstoppable, and once empire was achieved Rome's generals turned their arms against themselves. In the early imperial age, it seems, there was respite of a sort in the core of the Mediterranean, but military monarchy and the ideology of limitless empire it promoted demanded that opportunities for expansionist warfare often be pursued, and the respite was in any case brief: from the reign of Marcus till the fall of the empire in the west fighting in the Mediterranean was once more endemic. What is more culturally representative (or alarming) than the Portonaccio and Ludovisi sarcophagi?

What effect the culture of war had on children, especially boys, as they grew up and came to understand the realities of conflict around them is a subject that has received little attention so far. Means were sometimes found by which to train adolescents for combat, as Casey's study here of the Athenian ephebate (Chapter 21) shows, no matter how much the system may have admitted nonmilitary features in its later phase; also relevant is Kennell's judicious assessment of what can and cannot be known about the classical system of Spartan childrearing, in which elements of "the Spartan mirage"—increasingly under threat—are retained even as correspondences with wider Greek practices are clarified (Chapter 19). Whether the attractions of valor, however, were offset by fears of danger and death as boys grew into men is perhaps worth consideration. One element of the Spartan tradition that survives scrutiny is the young Spartiate's capacity to kill a helot, for any reason, as a kind of rite of passage. Yet precisely how that capacity was internalized and confronted in individual cases remains to my knowledge uninvestigated, as too the question of what, if anything, is recoverable of the life as a child of the helot who knew that he could at any moment become a victim of the young warrior's sword.¹⁶ Boys throughout antiquity might variously play with toy soldiers or pretend to be military commanders, and at Rome there was for a time the ritual of the Troy Game.¹⁷ The elder Cato notably provided in his day a model of good parenthood by teaching his son to throw a spear, to fight in armor, to ride a horse, to box, to endure heat and cold, and to swim in the Tiber.¹⁸ It is difficult nonetheless to understand if this was enough to prepare the young to march into battle free from anxiety, even those from rural areas who were preferred as recruits for the Roman army because of their inurement to hard work.¹⁹ The young Britannicus perhaps took pride in having a name that denoted conquest—he was intelligent enough to cast aspersions on his rival's merely aristocratic name—but when Roman schoolboys met the injunction to learn virtue or read that it

¹⁶ Ste. Croix 1972: 89–94 points conversely to the dangers to Spartiates from the threat of helot uprisings, noting with reference to Aristotle (*Pol.* 8.3.3) that the exercises intended to make Spartan boys courageous actually rendered them "beast-like" (91).

¹⁷ *Jouer dans l'antiquité, Musées de Marseille-Réunion des Musées Nationaux* (1991): 192 with pl. 28; Suet. *Nero* 35; Verg. *Aen.* 5.545–603.

¹⁸ Plut. *Cato Maior* 2.4.

¹⁹ Veg. *Mil.* 1.3.1–5; 1.6.3–5.

was honorable to die for one's country, were they aware of the human costs that warfare brought?²⁰ Some may be presumed to have seen sculptural representations of what happened to children when battles were lost, or come to learn how soldiers' wounds—from arrows with dangerous barbs, broad weapons, and poisoned lead balls—were surgically, and dangerously, treated.²¹ (Little wonder that Ascanius cried as Iapyx operated on Aeneas.)²² The psychology of growing up in the constant shadow of war may well therefore be an area to examine. The competitiveness of children's games, at times implicating girls as well as boys, could serve as a point of departure.²³

Throughout antiquity one routine adjunct of war was that the defeated, children included, were enslaved. In the Roman imperial age images of captives reminded everyone everywhere in the Mediterranean of this reality: the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius are obvious but important examples from the city itself.²⁴ Children could also be born into slavery, as examples in Sigismund-Nielsen's study demonstrate (Chapter 14), and in view of its immanence in the classical world—the institution was never seriously challenged—the impact of slavery on children is another subject that deserves attention in its own right, especially because slave children can sometimes be seen as the objects of sale and something of their individual histories consequently construed. The best evidence comes again from papyri, which show children in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt being sold respectively between the ages of four and ten and, with more documents available from the Roman period, from soon after birth to the onset of adulthood.²⁵ Familial and other personal relationships were presumably affected as the children were moved from household to household, most of all perhaps when journeys over long distances were involved. Two cases are particularly illustrative; first that of the six-year-old Epaphroditos, who in February or March 158 CE was transferred from the Small Oasis to Oxyrhynchus, after having been brought, in all likelihood, across the desert from Trimithis, a total distance of almost 500 kilometers; and secondly that of the sixteen-year-old Euploia, who apparently travelled some 560 kilometers along the Nile from Coptos to Cynopolis when she was sold in 270 CE.²⁶ Both situations may be taken to represent other transactions all across the ancient Mediterranean. Although her age is not mentioned, a new document shows how a slave girl ironically named Fortunata, "by nationality a Diablintian," was transferred about 100 CE for the price of 600 *denarii*

²⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 12.41; Verg. *Aen.* 12.435–9; Hor. *Od.* 3.2.13.

²¹ Uzzi 2005: ch. 8; Celsus 7.5.1–7.5.5.

²² Verg. *Aen.* 12.399 (illustrated in a famous painting from Pompeii now in Naples).

²³ Cf. Bradley 1998a. The climate of violence that seems often to have surrounded children's lives in antiquity is further reflected in the punishments at times revealed by the papyri of Hellenistic Egypt, as shown by Parca (Chapter 23), and the indications of abuse detectable through osteoarcheology, as brought forward by Liston and Rotroff (Chapter 3).

²⁴ Bradley 2004. To imagine being led in triumph as a result of enslavement remained a nightmare in late antiquity (Auson. *Ephem.* 8.18)

²⁵ Scholl 1990 I: 146–214; Straus 2004: 246–87 (both indebted to fundamental work by I. Biezunska-Malowist).

²⁶ P. Oxy. 60.4058; P. Oxy. 49.3477.

from Gaul to Britain where she became the property of a man who was himself a slave, but a slave of special status: he belonged to the emperor.²⁷ Historians of slavery commonly speak of deracination when considering the effects of these commercial acts on the commodities themselves. The term is clinical, and inadequate to my mind for expressing the human misery the slave trade involved. The history of children such as Epaphroditos and Euploia may repay further analysis.

Harlow's chapter on toys (Chapter 16) is a necessary preliminary to understanding the acculturative value of play, a subject helpfully promoted by the views of Shumka and Dolansky she summarizes. But play itself is a topic that naturally leads to the broader theme of socialization, whether in the sense of becoming used to the ubiquity of war or with regard to other preparations that children had to make for adult life. In turn socialization may lead to estimates of education in antiquity—that is what education did and did not mean. One term has a sociological cast, the other a multiplicity of formalistic connotations. Culturally precise definitions are again essential in the case of societies traditionalistic in character.

McWilliam (Chapter 13) and Vuolanto (Chapter 28) allow the handbook's readers to understand that socialization was a process that lasted through the whole of childhood. The belief that children were to be shaped over time into productive adult members of the communally oriented societies to which they belonged is all-pervasive in the historical record, underlying for instance the educational program that Plato set out in the *Laws*, no matter that the program owes more than is usually thought, with its emphasis on music and dance, to Athenian than to Spartan experience, as Patterson persuasively argues (Chapter 18). Molding the body of the newborn through swaddling and massage in the manner prescribed by Soranus (*Gyn.* 2.14–5; 2.30–5) was the beginning of the process; drawing on an integrative succession of religious rites as the child advanced in years was one of its key elements, documented in the handbook by Garland's brilliant treatment of children and classical Athenian religious institutions (Chapter 10); the emergence of the young adult as a fully fashioned social being capable of playing the role most appropriate to the child's status was its end, which in upper-class Roman society is illustrated by Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, a work that reflects an instructor's comprehensive knowledge of how to form the young from infancy onward along rigorously prescribed lines. There are innumerable items of evidence that share the same ethos.²⁸ (Even dining protocols might be involved.)²⁹ Precocity might sometimes be observed, and become as a result a feature prominent in literature: Pratt's survey of stereotypical images of children in Greek literary works makes this clear (Chapter 11). But independence of mind was a quality to be disciplined and brought under control. Deference to authority on the part of the child and internalization of traditional norms for the sake of the common good were generally expected; or to put it another way, social conformity,

²⁷ Tomlin 2003.

²⁸ Bradley 1994, 1999, 2013.

²⁹ Bradley 1998b; Roller 2006: ch. 3.

not the promotion of individuality, was the ideological goal. Polybius' description (6.53–4) of Roman public funerals might be kept in mind.

Several contributors to the handbook are concerned to take account of what they term children's agency, their ability as I understand it actively to influence the manner in which their childhood lives were spent and the ways in which they were prepared for adulthood. It is an appealing theoretical prospect, sensibly questioning whether the young should be regarded simply as passive entities that were to be conditioned, over time, to replicate their parents and all their parents represented, or whether children themselves helped to shape and contributed to the cultural environment in which they grew up. It may be the case in this connection that some of the apparently poorly made items of Greek pottery and bronze work in the material record discussed by Langdon (Chapter 8) are the work of children who were learning, but had not yet fully mastered, the techniques of the potter and smith and that signs of self-expression are detectable in them. If this is allowed, and the mode of thought extended to other aspects of the historical record, new dimensions of knowledge might well be exposed; the prospect should and will undoubtedly attract more attention. Its assumptions, however, seem to me to run counter to the cultural ethos to which I referred a moment ago, and a note of caution might duly be sounded, together with an appeal for refinement of the concept in relation to children's chronological and cognitive development. It can scarcely be assumed that children of very tender age could exercise significant influence of any kind, or were thought capable of so doing, as various items suggest.³⁰ Here notably Vuolanto (Chapter 28) draws on the construct with reference to adolescent children alone. Children learning to make pottery, whether in early Greek history or later, were learning one of the most traditional skills known in all of antiquity, and for reasons of economic necessity if nothing else it was a skill to be handed down from generation to generation in predictable and time-tested ways.

The hierarchical structure and demographic arrangement of Greco-Roman societies were such that the majority of any population comprised at any moment a huge sub-elite from whom, or which, labor for material and economic production was drawn. Agriculture, construction, manufacturing, mining and quarrying, shipping and the transportation of commercial goods across the Mediterranean—these were all labor-intensive activities that consumed vast numbers of people, and not only those reduced to slavery: most free people most of the time also had to be engaged with work. To think, solely for the Roman imperial age, of the way the capital was supplied with grain from Egypt and Africa, of the building in cities throughout the empire of the typical public forms of Roman urbanism—temples, baths, basilicas, theaters, amphitheaters, circuses—or of the production and distribution from region to region of such major staples as olives, *garum*, and wine (in specially manufactured containers)—this is more than enough for a sense to emerge of the extraordinary numbers of people who were

³⁰ See, e.g., Artem. 1.13; Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 2.3.7.

always occupied in physical labor of one kind or another, both skilled and unskilled.³¹ It was through work that most men and women provided themselves with their daily bread, and most of their children had to learn in childhood how they would meet their basic economic needs as adults. Productive self-sufficiency was one of the chief purposes of shaping, that is of socializing, children.

The point is illustrated by recalling the way in which fathers were expected to ensure that their sons acquired practical knowledge during their formative years, often handing down to them their own knowledge and skills. Artemidorus for instance addressed his work on the interpretation of dreams to his son, assuming that the boy would follow in his footsteps in the fullness of time, like an apprentice in an hereditary trade; it is no surprise therefore to notice that the brothers James and John were mending their fishing nets with their father Zebedee in his boat when they received the call.³² Children of the lower classes were expected to contribute to the domestic economy by working as soon as possible, and under this constraint advanced academic education was regarded as a waste of time. At Trimalchio's banquet the freedman Echion speaks of his son's future—the boy's name is Primigenius—and the obligation he himself feels to ensure that the boy receives training in a trade that will permit him to earn an income in adult life. Primigenius has had some exposure to Greek and Latin literary studies, he says, as well as to arithmetic, and he also has a taste for painting; but Echion has recently bought him some law books, because whatever the value of literature it cannot compete with a trade for lifetime success.³³ The same presumption of economic compulsion appears in Martial's advice to Lupus (5.56) that Lupus' son should have nothing to do with literature and should avoid poetry especially: to earn a good living the boy ought to become a *citharoedus*, a *choraules*, a *praeco* or an *architectus*. Fathers of elevated status might share the concern: "studium quid inutile temptas? Maeonides nullas ipse reliquit opes."³⁴

The prominence of the literary is so strong in classical scholarship that formal schooling can be assumed to have been widespread. (Not that education is a field of literary history.) But because the extent of literacy in Greco-Roman societies was low, the disproportionate attention modern studies give to the education of upper-class children creates a misleading impression.³⁵ Primigenius represents a model for some less privileged boys of the Roman imperial age: a certain amount of elementary instruction in a city or town where teachers were available, although in settings lacking rigid organization, as Bloomer here observes (Chapter 22); education in antiquity was not institutionalized

³¹ Reference to the images in Rostovtzeff 1941, 1957 is irresistible. (In the former observe very appositely Plates XXX, XXXI).

³² Artem. 4 pr.; Matt. 4: 18–22.

³³ Petr. Sat. 46.3–8. Elementary education was made more palatable if schoolmasters indulged their pupils with snacks (Hor. Sat. 1.24–6).

³⁴ Ov. Tr. 4.10.21–2. Perhaps this sort of attention contributed to the thought that a father's affection was the strongest love of all (Val. Max. 4.1.5) and that kindly fathers were blind to their sons' physical shortcomings (Hor. Sat. 1.3.44–53). See further Bradley 2012: ch. 10.

³⁵ Literacy is a controversial subject, but the estimates of Harris 1989 seem broadly realistic to me; cf. Morgan 1998: 271–3.

in the modern sense of that term.³⁶ The proportion nonetheless of children in any age cohort who went to school is likely to have been small and to have declined as its members advanced in years.³⁷ In the early second century the city of Comum had no teachers at all until Pliny volunteered to provide some of the necessary funding for them; his peers meantime were sending their sons to school in Milan, the costs of which must have restricted access.³⁸ Most children, however, did not belong to a world like that of Pliny and his teacher Quintilian—these men represent the truly marginal sector of society and the least typical of ordinary life—and the market for privileged orators trained according to Quintilian's curriculum was minuscule compared with that for potters, smiths, stevedores, carpenters, sculptors, butchers, bakers, and the myriad other trades and occupations to be found, for instance, in Artemidorus' book on dreams. The luxury of such a syllabus was unavailable to the sons and daughters of the working and middling classes, children who were very different figures from, for example, Cicero's son Marcus, whose advanced education in Athens was financed by his father's activities as a slumlord.³⁹

More consequently might be recovered about childhood experiences in antiquity, especially perhaps about the experiences of adolescence, if greater attention is paid in the future to the scale, diversity, and labor requirements of prime economic activities, with appropriate distinctions drawn between urban and rural activities. Dillon's demonstration here (Chapter 20) that girls are regularly shown on classical Athenian vases as literate and cultured is an important indication of the educational opportunities sometimes available to the privileged, despite the sheltered atmosphere in which girls are conventionally thought to have lived, yet the lives of the young servile attendants who are included with them as standard features on the vases are still to be explored, so that issues of social differentiation come into play, together with questions about the exercise of authority over the underprivileged. Similarly if upper-class Athenians conditioned their children to learn gendered adult roles, as Beaumont maintains (Chapter 9), many lower-class parents, like Echion, presumably had more practical aims in mind, such as staving off poverty or the exigencies of economic fate: beggary was a real possibility for a pauper evicted from his lodgings, and reduction to slavery a tragedy for the military tribune who could not pay for his father's funeral.⁴⁰ I suspect that many children in antiquity, particularly those who lived in rural villages and hamlets, learned more from the plough, the hoe, the sickle and the pruning fork—the emblems of the seasons widely displayed in mosaics—than they ever did from schoolbooks.⁴¹ Finley put it this way:

³⁶ Morgan 1998: 25–33.

³⁷ Saller 2007: 107–10.

³⁸ Plin. *Ep.* 4.13.

³⁹ On the middling sectors of Roman society see Mayer 2012.

⁴⁰ Mart. 12.32; Dion. Hal. 16.5 (9). On definitions and the scope of poverty see Whittaker 1993; Harris 2011: ch. 2.

⁴¹ On season mosaics see Parrish 1984.

Among the peasants, who always constituted the majority of the Greco-Roman population, and among the self-employed craftsmen and shopkeepers in the towns, sons began to work as early as they still do in many parts of the world. Those who were apprenticed to others in order to learn a trade seem to have set off on their new lives between the ages of twelve and fourteen. For all practical purposes their childhood ended then.⁴²

One of the most difficult issues in ancient social history in view of the idiosyncrasies of the evidence is that of convincingly illustrating change over time. This is especially true when the time span involved, as here, is enormous.⁴³ The problem is due in part, as intimated before, to the almost complete absence of quantifiable data, but disparities in the quality and type of evidence from one period to another are also relevant. Often no more than impressions of change are possible. The orators of the late classical Athenian age provide a case in point. Much can be gathered from their speeches about the social realities and complexities of Athenian life, such as the ways in which family conflicts arose and were settled.⁴⁴ But there is nothing comparable to them for earlier or later periods of Greek history, and other realities and complexities are consequently less accessible. A generation ago, “the emergence of the small child at Rome” was an influential developmental idea, advanced from a study of late Republican Roman poetry.⁴⁵ It was an idea constrained, however, by the question of what could be adequately compared in the Latin literary tradition from a prior period with the poetry of Lucretius and Catullus where the “emergence” seemed to manifest itself. A similar condition attaches to another prominent thesis, namely that Roman affective attitudes became generally more caring through the central era of Roman history.⁴⁶ The methodological challenge is reflected here in Huebner’s study (Chapter 25) of eastern Mediterranean adoption practices, which relies heavily on the fortuitous survival of a certain amount of evidence from Rhodes, suggestive though that evidence is, and in Evans Grubbs’ proposition that child abandonment was resisted under the impact of early Christianity (Chapter 4), a view that may well have a justifiable rationale but which once more defies measurement.

The question is compounded further by issues of regionalism, as Huebner’s chapter again suggests (Chapter 25), where the view is presented that attitudes toward the adoption of children differed in the eastern Mediterranean from those in the western Mediterranean, with young children preferred in the east and older children in the west. The allusions to Rome’s enemies, however, that appear in the Latin poetry studied by Golden (Chapter 12) remind the reader that the cultural diversity of the ancient Mediterranean was far greater than the basic division between east and west implies. Rome in the imperial age united a multiplicity of Mediterranean peoples under its rule whose cultural practices cannot be presumed always to have been more or less the same

⁴² Finley 1981: 160.

⁴³ Cf. Golden 1997 on the Hellenistic era.

⁴⁴ Hunter 1994.

⁴⁵ Manson 1983.

⁴⁶ Veyne 1978; cf. Mayer 2012.

as those of the dominant cultures. The survival of local customs beneath the veneer of commonality the political hegemony provided, associated obviously enough with differing ethnicities, is evident from the languages other than Greek and Latin spoken in the imperial Mediterranean and the welter of divinities worshipped at the local level: Punic, Celtic, Aramaic in the former category, Sucellus, Cocidius, Tanit, Ammon in the latter. Long lists could be compiled.

It may be worth asking as a result what can be recovered of the lives of children in the regional interstices of the ancient Mediterranean, a question encouraged by the variations Stevens shows (Chapter 30), from one western location to another, in the seemingly widespread convention of burying deceased infants in amphorae and also by the Demotic texts Parca brings forward in her chapter on Hellenistic Egypt (Chapter 23). Investigation of ethnographic literature might prove useful in this regard. Note as a possibility how Tacitus (*Germ.* 19.5, 20.1, 20.3), offsetting practices he took as normative in his own world, said that there was no family limitation among the Germanic tribes whose customs he had investigated, that mothers nursed their children themselves without handing them over to slave women and wet nurses, and that girls were not forced into early marriages but married husbands of an equal, more mature, age. Tacitus knew too (*Germ.* 13.1) of a Germanic coming of age ceremony for boys, in which fathers and other male relatives took part but not female relatives, a feature clearly distinguishable from Roman practices when boys assumed the *toga virilis*; the Germanic ceremony involved conferment of a shield and spear upon boys to mark their attainment of warrior status.⁴⁷ Material evidence might also be helpful. Note also, at the other end of the Mediterranean, the so-called Terenouthis stelae from Egypt of the Roman era that combine Hellenistic and Egyptian cultural forms, with inscriptions in either Greek or Demotic in which the intriguing epithet “fond of children” is commonly used to honor the dead.⁴⁸ The usage hints at a local peculiarity of special interest. Although not restricted regionally in the same way, the importance of considering differing ethnic childrearing habits is affirmed by the advances made by Sivan (Chapter 26) in her treatment of the lives of Jewish children on the fringes of empire, in which the implications of cultural competitiveness are particularly striking.⁴⁹

One incontestable change, and the most significant, is the slow but inexorable shift in the four centuries marked roughly by the reigns of Tiberius and Theodosius from a predominantly polytheistic world to a world increasingly monotheistic in religious complexion. Christianity made a difference. The change is visually striking in the iconography of pre-Christian and Christian sarcophagi, which at one moment, it seems, show a repertory of scenes drawn from a centuries-old mythological tradition familiar in Greco-Roman culture at large—Bacchus in triumph, Meleager and the Calydonian

⁴⁷ On the *toga virilis* see Dolansky 2008.

⁴⁸ The stelae can be seen in the Papyrismuseum der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Vienna; cf. Rowlandson 1998: no. 276.

⁴⁹ Such allowances might add nuance to Laes’ wide-ranging survey (Chapter 6) of the far from dispassionate ways, as he suggests, in which Greeks and Romans responded to handicapped children.

boar, Selene and Endymion, Phaedra and Hippolytus, the rape of Persephone—and then suddenly, it seems, present very different images drawn first from the far more exclusive mythological tradition of the Hebrew scriptures, and secondly from the abrupt emergence of a completely new Christian mythology. In the former category there is Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac, the crossing of the Red Sea, Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den; in the second category the miracles of the loaves and fishes, the wedding at Cana, the healing of the blind and the lame. (Some sarcophagi combine the old with the new and show change in progress.)⁵⁰ A parallel may be drawn with the signs of change and continuity evident in the catacomb inscriptions examined in the handbook by Kreiger (Chapter 29). Ultimately, however, the transition is complete, and although Larsson Lovén (Chapter 15) suggests that Christian funerary art in general brought an end to representation of children, in the new sarcophagus scenes children seem to the untrained eye to be no less visible than in the old.⁵¹

One element that assumes prominence in the new representational mode is the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden, which by definition brings to the fore not only the mournful explanation of why men and women were compelled to work for their daily bread,⁵² but also the association of guilt with the act of sexual intercourse that the new religion lugubriously imposed upon its adherents. In the past Greco-Roman societies had regulated themselves with strict codes of morality and propriety—as is implicit for instance in McGinn's contribution (Chapter 17)—and for centuries they had invented appropriate laws, penalties, and other methods of social control to govern acts of sexual transgression such as adultery.⁵³ As far as I know, however, Greeks and Romans had not conceived of the sexual act itself as inherently evil, the cause of a fall from a state of grace in which all humanity was implicated. This was a stunning difference.

In the pre-Christian Mediterranean children from infancy onwards were used to seeing phallic images in everyday life, on the amulets that parents put around their necks to ward off ill luck, on herms and the walls of buildings whose inhabitants the images safeguarded, on the bells (*tintinnabula*) found in many of their houses, and on representations of the god Priapus in fields nearby (which children sometimes found alarming).⁵⁴ They were also likely to see erotic images, including scenes of sexual activity, on household lamps, vases, and a multiplicity of other ordinary objects, as also in more refined works of painting, mosaic, and sculpture.⁵⁵ I know of no way to estimate what they saw

⁵⁰ As do other art objects, the Projecta casket perhaps being the most famous illustration.

⁵¹ See Zanker and Ewald 2004 *passim* for representative images. The contrast is especially noticeable from a collection of sarcophagi in the Musée de l'Arles antique, which visitors see while (literally) walking from the classical to the Christian world at the conclusion of their visit.

⁵² Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 2.12.19.

⁵³ For classical Greece see Cohen 1991; for Rome see Langlands 2006.

⁵⁴ Var. *Ling.* 7.97; cf. 107; Col. *Rust.* 10.32; for amulets see Bradley 2005.

⁵⁵ Representative images in for example Dover 1978; Johns 1982; Clarke 1998; Stampolidis and Tassoulas 2009. The fig leaf was unnecessary.

of actual erotic activity, but in their ideologically less encumbered world, and despite the standards of decorous comportment they were taught, pre-Christian Greek and Roman children were not instilled as far as I can judge with fears that sexual activity in and of itself had eternal metaphysical consequences.⁵⁶ Under the new dispensation, in contrast, the human body became taboo, virginity was celebrated to extremes, and sexual renunciation was cultivated even among husbands and wives: Melania and Pinianus provide the classic example.⁵⁷ All because of the anxieties Christian teachers created among their followers of what could happen to them in the afterlife, no matter that the allure and the dread of the erotic became palpable in the teachers themselves, figures such as Clement, Tertullian, and, as Leyerle here makes clear (Chapter 27), John Chrysostom.⁵⁸ With Jerome a powerful misogyny, the legacy of Eve, also set in.⁵⁹ Consequently as mental attitudes changed in late antiquity children came to be shaped in communities where sex and shame were linked in a way and to a degree that they had never been linked before. How to measure the effect upon them—the burden of the Fall—is a challenge.⁶⁰

Whether under these circumstances it is true that early Christian literature displays an increased interest in the everyday lives of children, as Leyerle maintains (Chapter 27), is a question to ponder. Anecdotes in Christian authors describing children at play are the same in type, and often content, as those found in earlier Greek and Latin literature, and may now seem plentiful simply because a plentiful supply of Christian texts from a long interval of time has survived to be read. In any case, the radically sectarian character of Christianity's earliest phase raises doubts about any unanimity of social viewpoint, or even when it might become legitimate to speak of "the Church."⁶¹ An alarming note is sounded in the late second century by the neoplatonist Celsus, who thought of Christian evangelists as a predatory danger to the young, and in view of the threats to traditional family values they represented his fears may have been justified.⁶² The sexual temptation that children were sometimes thought to represent to Christians, to which Leyerle also points, may explain sufficiently whatever increase of attention there might have been; but much more investigation is needed on this front. The claim made elsewhere that in comparison with previous Greco-Roman history the rise of Christianity

⁵⁶ See *OCD*⁴ s.v. "sin" (1369–1371, Versnel) for a clear distinction between Greco-Roman and Christian views of eternal punishment.

⁵⁷ Brown 1988; Elm 1994; Cooper 1996, 2007; cf. Evans Grubbs 1995 (a conservative approach). On Christianity's "unhealthy attitude to sex" and some effects of "the frightful prospect of eternal damnation," see above all Ste. Croix 1981: 103–11, 447–52.

⁵⁸ As Marguerite Yourcenar affirmed (*Les Yeux ouverts: Entretiens avec Matthieu Gale* [Paris 1980]: 77), Christianity has always been marked by "désapprobation de la chair."

⁵⁹ *Ep.* 22 remains perpetually shocking.

⁶⁰ Christian teaching and adult Christian behavior were not of course always consistent; see Lane Fox 1987: 351–74; Orme 2001: 328–34.

⁶¹ Frend 1984. On the Christian revolution in general see Jones 1964: 972–85; MacMullen 1997; Hopkins 1999: ch. 3.

⁶² Origen, *C. Cels.* 55; Bradley 2012: ch. 6.

brought improving changes in attitudes towards the sexual abuse of children is particularly provocative.⁶³

The handbook makes the everyday lives of children in Greco-Roman antiquity at large and the conditions that governed their lives more comprehensible than ever before. It marks therefore a major advance in knowledge. Its most compelling feature is the demonstration that in a multiplicity of ways the influence of children is perceptible in every medium of evidence now available to historians: every literary genre and every form of documentary and material record. A generation ago it was natural for historians to work primarily from, and to give privilege to, literary and documentary sources. But as the subject has matured the additional contributions from archeological and art historical evidence have been substantial, and much more is to be anticipated: the sub-field of osteoarcheology in particular might well produce further information on diet and disease, especially within localized contexts.⁶⁴ New theoretical models and new assessments based on comparative evidence will also, more generally, come into play. Meantime this volume displays a range of approaches to the study of childhood and education in antiquity that far exceeds that of the first generation's work, and opens up simultaneously many questions for the next generation of scholars to address once the early work has been fully assimilated.⁶⁵ The guiding principle must remain recovery of the truly distinctive features of children's lives in Greco-Roman antiquity, in all their variability, and the eventual goal a comprehensive history of classical childhood. In this pursuit the key elements remain to my mind the ubiquity of children in classical communities, the need those communities constantly felt to shape their children for the common good, and the very early arrival for most children of adult obligations and responsibilities.

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⁶³ Horn and Martens 2009: 349, predicated on "the reality of sin, which pervades all human life" (346); cf. Laes 2011: ch. 6.

⁶⁴ Finley understandably expressed at times an antipathy towards the archeological report that recalls attitudes attributed by Kingsley Amis to James Dixon, but there can be no dispute about the value of new data on which historians may draw to confirm, refine, or refute established views and opinions.

⁶⁵ The point is important: reinvention of the wheel is unnecessary.

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